Pete Tait's Script 2007

EXT. GUMFIELDS - DAY

There's a heat haze hanging over the gumfields, south of Ahipara way. The figure of a man stumbles through the scrubby bush. Moving closer we can see it's a sweaty cop, his ankles seem to be shackled, making walking difficult.

His hand is grasped around a rolled up notebook, giving the impression he's holding a relay race baton.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSH - DAY

The kukupa surveys the world from high up in the grove of miro trees. It's eyes take in the surrounds.

The kukupa picks at miro berries.

The kukupa flies off across the valley. The colours of the bird are seen in all their glory. Turquoise, white and pink. It's a powerful lazy flight, seemingly unperturbed by predators.

EXT. BUSH - DAY

From below, a rifle follows the arc of the bird, finger on the trigger.

MAX
Had a good feed, eh? Just the way we like 'em.

The eye moves closer to the barrel.

A shot rings out. The bird falls from the sky.

The body of the native wood pigeon drops out of the canopy and lands with a thump on the leafy forest floor.

Heavy boots crunch across the ground towards the dead bird. A hand reaches down, retrieving the body of the plump wood pigeon.

MAX (CONT'D)
There you are sweetheart. Off to a good home.

MAX's large figure shambles off, the dead kukupa dangling from his huge hand.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

MANU emerges from the sea wearing a wetsuit. He carries a half-filled sack of paua, mussels and kina, up the beach, and dumps it down.

Manu sees a slightly battered white Chrysler Valiant, bouncing along a rough road towards him. The car is weighed down by the occupant inside.

The car rolls up alongside Manu. Max passes a newspaper package to Manu, giving a knowing nod, as he does so.

MAX
Didn't see anything did ya Manu?

The car roars off.

(Song: "White Valiant" by The Muttonbirds.)

Manu holds the newspaper package, turns it over in his hands.

INT. CAR - DAY

Manu drives along the roadway beside the beach. Outside the window he watches two young women surrounded by seagulls tossing rolled oats into the air. The girls are surrounded by the frenzied seagulls.

Manu glances at them through the rear vision mirror, as he drives away. The crumpled newspaper package grabs his attention. Manu stares down at the dead native wood pigeon poking out from the newspaper. He pulls the paper over to conceal the exposed bird.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

A local cop; Brian; sits in his police car, stuffing his face with a large piece of cake.

Crumbs spill out of his mouth and onto the notebook he is writing in. He crosses out the word "pidgin" and tries again. Brian's attention is drawn to the rumble of an approaching car.

Brian watches an old white valiant drive past. He quickly writes down ..... "Max bloody Kite." Wolfing down the cake as he drives, Brian follows the white valiant, from a discreet distance.

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INT. CAR -DAY

The police car pulls out of a side road in front of Manu's car. Manu watches the police car follow the white valiant up the road. Manu slows down and keeps his own distance.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

The white valiant stops outside a house on the outskirts of Kaitaia. Carrying a newspaper package in his hand, Max saunters up the path to the house. He knocks at the door, and waits. An elderly woman comes to the door. Max gives her the package and kisses her on the cheek. The woman seems grateful.

EDIT
I couldn't tempt you with a small glass of wine Max?

MAX
Go on, twist my arm then.

Max walks inside.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

Brian glances curiously up towards the old house. He writes the address down in his notebook.

INT. SALON - DAY

Inside the Hair n' Now Hair Salon .....SHARON is sitting on the salon sofa, reading. Her teenage daughter MARAMA listens to her headphones as she sucks a baby's dummy.

Sharon glances up to see Marama sucking on the dummy.

SHARON
Do you have to?

MARAMA
What?

SHARON
Suck that thing of yours.

MARAMA
Not even mine.

SHARON
That's even worse.

Sharon hears noises from the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Manu deposits the sack of 'kai moana' on the bench beside the sink. Taking a sharp knife .....Manu deftly opens the paua.

Humming while he works .....Manu chops up the paua on a large wooden chopping board.

Dropping the chunks into a plastic bag ....Manu adds garlic, ground pepper and some herbs to the mixture. Holding the end of the bag down .....he pummels the contents with his fist ...down onto the chopping board .....softening and blending the ingredients together.

To this mixture Manu adds some flour .....and rolls them with his hands into patties.

Sharon enters and observes Manu prepare the paua fritters.

SHARON
What is it about kids and books? You think they'd be grateful for ya reading to them .....shit no ....they want to be zombies and blow their brains out with sounds all day....

Sharon glances at the newspaper on the table. Sharon opens it, and is horrified by what she sees.

SHARON (CONT'D)
What's this?

Manu shrugs his shoulders.

Sharon looks at the dead kukupa.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Shit bro. Didn't think you had it in you.

MANU
I don't.

Sharon nods to herself.

SHARON
Shame to waste kai like this.

MANU
Waste it?

SHARON
Better eat the evidence eh. We can't leave it like this.

Sharon picks up the bird and prepares it for eating ....admires the plumpness of the bird. Manu looks somewhat guiltily on.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Bird's mate'll be looking for it now though. These fellas mate for life. That's true love for ya bro. Not something you'd know a lot about. You're like those rabbits or possums ..... fuck a fur hat if they found it on the road.

MANU
I'm not that desperate.

SHARON
Just as well. I like my hats.

Manu chuckles .....continuing his food preparation.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE -DAY

Max curses as he tries to make room for his bag of kukupa in the freezer. It has proved to be more of a struggle than Max would have liked. He has to pull out other objects to fit it in ...a task that puts him in a foul mood.

MAX
What's all this shit?

PATSY
It's that sheep.

MAX
What sheep?

PATSY
Sheep you banged into that night. Out Peria way.

MAX
Better eat it then. Gotta make room for more birds.

Max grunts as he extricates the leg of mutton out from the freezer.

INT. SHARONS SALON -DAY

Manu and Sharon sit around the table ......using their fingers to eat with ....helping themselves to the cooked kereru and paua fritters.

Sharon looks over at Manu. Manu somewhat guiltily eats.

SHARON
Could lose your job, go inside, if you got caught with this stuff.

MANU
You'd have to sack yourself.

SHARON
Yeah lay myself off. Only lay I'll probably get.

Sharon and Manu laugh. Marama enters ....and looks scornfully down at the food on the table.

MARAMA
What's this?

SHARON
Chicken.

MARAMA
That's not chicken.

SHARON
Special kind of chicken. Friend of Manu, grows them.

MARAMA
You don't grow birds Mum. You breed them.

SHARON
Wondered what you did with them?

MARAMA
Can I have some money for takeaways. I'm not eating that.

Sharon frowns as she hands Marama some coins. Marama takes the money and leaves.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Brian sneaks up the wooden steps and along the porch. He goes up to the window and peers inside. There's voices at the front door. It opens and Brian slinks back into the shadows. Max gives Edit a kiss on the cheek, before departing.

EDIT
And don't you dare call it dally plonk again Mr Kite.

MAX
Sweet. Sure thing Edit. Dorbro Dosli.

EDIT
That's hullo. You've already said that.

MAX
Say it again. It's all kia ora to me.

Max chuckles as he climbs into his car. The car lurches off into the night. Edit watches it go before retreating inside.

Brian stands stock still in the shadows.

INT. HOUSE -DAY

Brian lifts up a sash window and climbs inside, wripping the crutch of his trousers on a nail in the process. Torchlight splays around the walls .... revealing details ....there's photos of Dalmatian men in the gumfields, family photos, and there's the fridge. Brian tip-toes over to the fridge .... opens it and stares at the freshly killed bird ....sitting beside half a chocolate cake. Brian helps himself to a big piece of cake.

Brian stands in the light of the fridge chomping on chocolate cake. He stops mid munch .....disturbed by a noise.

EDIT KRASSOLL rears above Brian with an old saucepan raised above her head. She brings it down onto Brian's head. The pot makes contact with a popping sound. Brian is stunned. Attempting to fend off the attacker, he uses the fridge door as a shield.

The heavy fridge door knocks the older woman down. She lands awkwardly, banging her head on the corner of a bench. She groans and falls to the floor. Brian is horrified ... he stares aghast down at the prone figure of Edit Krassoll. His voice garbled by cake, he tries placating her in soothing fashion.

BRIAN
Jeez. You're OK, aren't you? Are you OK?
Shit. Tell me you're OK.

Brian stoops over Edit, and gathers her up in his arms. The stunned Edit stares up at Brian. She mutters something incomprehensible in Dalmatian.

EDIT
(MUTTERING)
Damn you. Pig of a man.

Brian drags Edit along the hallway, to her bedroom. He carefully lays her on the bed. Edit continues to mutter. Brian gives her a quick wave and leaves her there. He heads back out the way he came, ripping his trousers getting back out through the window. Brian slams the window shut, and runs off.

INT. POLICE CAR -NIGHT

The police car drives quickly away from the scene.

INT. EDIT'S BEDROOM -NIGHT

Edit Krassoll breathes her last as she lies on her bed.

Zooming into her dying face, memories seem to flicker. Eyelids briefly twitch. There's a clacketty clack sound of a train. Rhythm continues into the next frames.

WHITE-OUT

INT. AUCKLAND FLAT -DAY

The sound of a train over onto the sleeping frame of Steve. A ringing phone jolts Steve out of his dream. Steve stumbles towards the telephone in the hall.

STEVE
Yeah? What is it?

HARRY V/O
Steven, your mother passed away in the night. I thought you should know. The funerals on Saturday up here in Kaitaia. The body's gonna be at her place ...for family and friends to pay respects ....all day Friday. I've got other calls to make. So if you're interested.

STEVE takes a while for the news to register.

STEVE
Course I'm fuckin' interested.

STEVE stares angrily at the phone.

INT. HARRY'S HOUSE -DAY

HARRY Yelich barks down the phone to STEVE.

HARRY
Don't shoot the messenger .... little prick.

Harry puts the phone down in abrupt fashion.

Harry grumpily chooses a pair of shoes from the row of straight looking men's shoes. Harry fastidiously shines them, until he can gaze at his reflection in the shiny leather. From his furry nostrils .....Harry pulls out a stray nose hair.

INT. AUCKLAND FLAT -DAY

Steve sombrely packs some clothes together, stuffing them into an old tramper's pack.

He digs around the room of his messy city flat, and picks up a CD. He runs his finger down the tracks .....his finger stops at the title "It's All Over Now Baby Blue." He puts the CD into his cheap machine.

EXT. MACROCARPA HEDGE -DAY

The police car is parked up discreetly behind a macrocarpa hedge. Brian scribbles in his notebook.

"Hepi Ropata. 212 Gartons Rd., suspekt. P. Known drug user."

A motorbike comes barrelling out of a rural driveway. Brian watches it speed off, before getting out of the car. Brian walks up to the heavy corrugated iron door. It isn't locked so he opens it up and walks inside.

INT. HEPI'S HOUSE -DAY

Brian sniffs the air, recognizing the pungent smell of marijuana. Brian curiously lifts up the piece of fruit that has a roach attached to it.

Opening the fridge .... Brian finds a birthday cake. Brian pulls it out. The lettering on the cake says ....."Happy Birthday Hepi."

Brian helps himself to a piece ....eating the bit with Hepi on it. His voice is garbled by cake as he mutters.

BRIAN
Yeah .....happy birthday Hepi.

Brian looks around as he eats. There's a lot of ingredients and cook books to do with baking. Brian takes note of a book with the title "Home Baking' .....jots the title down in his notebook.

EXT. MOTORWAY ON RAMP -DAY

A succession of cars speed past Steve ....who stands by the road .....holding a rough cardboard sign saying 'Far North.'

A van stops up the road. Steve runs towards it.

EXT. ROADSIDE -DAY

The van door slides open. It's full of forestry workers. Steve stumbles over chainsaws and scrub-bars, to a seat.

There's a grunt from the front ....then the van door slides shut.

EXT. ROADSIDE -DAY

Steve trudges along the side of the road. A farmer; with his dog sitting in the Ute passenger seat; pulls up in front of Steve. The farmer indicates ....for Steve to climb onto the tray of the Ute. The Farmer drives off. Steve huddles from the wind, while the dog lords it in the cab.

EXT. ROADSIDE -DAY

Turning around to stick out a tired thumb .....Steve sees a V Dub coming slowly along the road. ANGELA and SARAH, come to a stop in front of Steve. Steve trots up to the car. A voice calls out through a slit in the window.

ANGELA
Ya heading north?

STEVE
Yeah.

ANGELA
How far?

STEVE
Far North.

ANGELA
Hop in.

Sarah climbs out of the front seat so Steve can squeeze into the back.

EXT. ROAD -DAY

Cows are crossing the rural road, after milking. A dog barks and jostles them along. Cars have stopped to let the cows move across.

The woman share-milker gestures for them to wait. Steve stares at what seems to be porridge flakes and birdshit in the back of Angela's bushy hair.

ANGELA
If dolphins and whales had stayed on land, they would've been farmed. Their milk made into cheese. We'd all be drinking whale and dolphin milk instead of cows milk.

SARAH
Who would?

ANGELA
We would.

SARAH
Be full fat milk with whales ...

ANGELA
Full fat alright .... oceanized, not pasturized ....and heaps of choice of cheese.

SARAH
Yeah blue cheese. Humpback cheese.

ANGELA
Killer cheese .... sperm cheese.

SARAH
Sperm cheese?

ANGELA
Yeah whales and dolphins had it sussed. They weren't gonna spend their lives being milked.

SARAH
How did they get there?

ANGELA
To the sea?

SARAH
Yeah.

ANGELA
They walked.

SARAH
On what?

ANGELA
Feet. Their flippers used to be feet.

Steve stares at the porridge flakes in Angela and Sarah's hair and the bird shit that streaks through Angela's hair.

STEVE
What's in yer hair?

Angela fingers her hair ....before casually sniffing her fingers. She recoils in horror.

ANGELA
Ugrh. Ungrateful birds.

Angela stares at her fingers in disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. WAKE -DAY

Harry and Albie are sitting at the kitchen table. The table is laden with booze of differing varieties. Full measures of strong spirits are in their glasses.

ALBIE
So how's all her stuff being divvied up?

HARRY
That little shit of hers'll get the house. He better not stay though. End up growing dope in the backyard.

ALBIE
Worked for you.

HARRY
Only the once.

ALBIE
Once was enough in those days. Here's to your sister anyway.

HARRY
Which one?

ALBIE
The dead one. Jivoli.

HARRY
Jivoli.

The two old friends clink classes.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

BENSON; the senior officer at the Kaitaia police station; glowers over at Brian. Brian sporting a big bump on his forehead awkwardly returns the stare. Benson indicates with his finger, that Brian's got food on his face. Brian quickly wipes his face with the back of his hand.

BENSON
Grab your jacket?

BRIAN
Why, what's up?

BENSON
Dead bod to see.

BRIAN
Who?

BENSON
Edit Krassoll. Evidently fell and banged her head. Better pay our respects. Amazing who turns up for the dead.

BRIAN
I've got paperwork to do .....there's a P suspect that ....

BENSON
P can wait. Best place to find the wanted is at a wake. Let's go.

Brian meekly succumbs to Benson's wishes.

INT. SHARONS KITCHEN -DAY

Sharon bustles into the kitchen.

SHARON
You hear about Steve's mum?

Manu shakes his head nonchalantly.

MANU
What about Steve's mum?

SHARON
Youse were mates, eh?

MANU
Was mates ....past tense.

SHARON
Who cares what kind of tents. Come and pay respects eh?

MANU
I dunno.

SHARON
Get off your arse bro. Come on.

Manu somewhat reluctantly stands.

EXT. HOUSE -DAY

Angela's car pulls up outside the wake. There are dark cars disgorging passengers ....many of whom are dressed in suits carrying musical instrument cases ....making them look like the mafioso.

ANGELA
Mafiosa in the family?

STEVE
Mafiosavichs. Come in if you like. Drinks are on the viches, on mum anyway. She always liked her red.

SARAH
Red her colour?

STEVE
Was her colour. She won't be round to appreciate it.

SARAH
Red's a magic colour. Faeries all wore red hats.

ANGELA
Here you'd better take this.

Angela lights an incense stick and passes it to Steve.

SARAH
It'll cleanse the air for spirits to pass.

STEVE
Let the spirits pass then.

Steve scrambles out of the car. He stops and stares up at the house. The two girls alight from the car and stare at the suburban Kaitaia surrounds.

EXT. BACKYARD -DAY

A large number of locals and extended family are mingling and drinking at the funereal party ..... spilling out into the back-yard. Steve .....carrying the stick of incense ....walks around to where burly men ....are roasting a lamb on the spit. They all turn to stare at him and the two women following him. Steve gives an apologetic wave.

The swarthy looking group of men give Steve nods of recognition. Men reach out their rough hands in greeting.

Steve shakes their hands in turn. Grim moustachioed faces nod their heads in his direction.

Uncle Harry watches Steve from the top step. Steve makes his way up the steps. Angela and Sarah stare up at the smug looking local businessman.

Harry; playing the family patriarch; gives Steve a somewhat cool welcome. He stares scornfully at Steve flanked by the two young ladies bearing incense.

HARRY
Saves having a shower I suppose.

Steve shrugs his shoulders, offers a handshake.

STEVE
Uncle Harry.

HARRY
Boy.

STEVE
So where's all the wine then Harry?

HARRY
Safely stored from the likes of you.

STEVE
Still the tight arse, even today.

HARRY
She's lying in state, in her bedroom, if you want to see her.

STEVE
Course I wanna see her.

Harry glares as Steve walks past him. Angela and Sarah both give dippy smiles as they follow Steve into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN -DAY

Steve pours himself a large tumbler of wine. He smiles at Angela and Sarah and pours them a couple of large glasses of red wine.

Across the room, Harry pours whisky into a tumbler for Benson. Benson seems comfortable in this environment, unlike Brian who seems very on edge.

Brian .....the bump prominent on his forehead .....refuses a drink. Eyes look haunted.

BENSON
Get us some ice, will you Brian.

Brian approaches the fridge with caution. His hands seem unsteady as he reaches for the ice. He drops ice cubes onto the floor and bends down to pick them up.....exposing the rip in his trousers.

Steve chuckles to himself at the sight of the local cop with the rip in his trousers, putting the ice cubes from the floor into the glass.

Steve moves over towards the fridge. He stands close to where his mother had stood ....when Brian encountered her.

Brian gives a brief startled glance at Steve when he notices him standing beside the fridge. Patsy; an older Maori woman; bustles between them. Brian slinks back to Benson with the drinks.

Patsy pulls the fridge door back and pulls out a plump bird on a plate. She holds the plate in front of Angela and Sarah.

PATSY
Ah dear .....she knew how to look after people alright ....used to make these into pies.

SARAH
Bird pie?

PATSY
Bush chicken pie. Medicinal properties she reckoned. She knew. (SMELLING BIRD ON PLATE) Mmmm .....smells fresh. Better just boil it up I think.

Patsy proceeds to put the dead 'bush chicken' into a pot of boiling water ...adds herbs she finds in the cupboard. Brian joins Benson ....who has been watching the bush chicken with an eagle eye.

INT. BEDROOM -DAY

Steve stares at the body lying in state in the familiar bedroom.

Albie walks in, nods to Steve and walks over beside the body mutters something in Croatian before slipping a $20 note behind the ear of the corpse. Steve waits until Albie has left has left the room, before he walks up to the bed. Shrugging his shoulders at the corpse he takes the 20$ note. Steve gulps wine from out of a large tumbler, as he stares at the body. He raises the glass to the body.

STEVE
Cheers mum. Jivoli.

He tosses back the wine.

INT. HALLWAY/BEDROOM -DAY

Sharon walks through the bustle of the wake ... a handbag with her hair tools inside, slung over her shoulder. In the bedroom Sharon finds Steve. Sharon goes up to him and gives Steve a hug.

SHARON
Gidday Steve. Kia Ora bro.

STEVE
Hi ya Sharon.

SHARON
Haven't seen much of you 'round here for a while mate?

STEVE
You noticed?

SHARON
Course. Don't mind if I touch your mum up do you?

STEVE
Sure.

SHARON
Sweet. Always liked to look her best. She was a special woman your mum. I hope you know that?

STEVE
Yeah I do. Well I did. Yeah she was.

Sharon proceeds to touch up the hair on the corpse, taking great care with the look.

Steve watches Sharon fussing with the hair. He slugs back another mouthful.

Patsy walks into the bedroom. Patsy stares down at Edit and sighs as she observes Steve drinking by the coffin.

PATSY
Not in here.

Steve shrugs.

STEVE
What?

PATSY
The drink?

STEVE
She wouldn't mind.

PATSY
It's not appropriate.

STEVE
Appropriate? She's my mum in there.

PATSY
You're Stephen are you.

STEVE
Steve, yeah.

PATSY
Give us a hug boy.

Steve is enveloped by Patsy.

INT. BEDROOM -DAY

Sharon and Patsy are standing over the body.

PATSY
Good for her to have company. Not good to leave the whanau alone. Dallies are a bit different though.

SHARON
I suppose you've seen a few bodies in your time auntie?

PATSY
A fair few.

SHARON
Usually boarded up when I've seen them.

PATSY
When my first husband died, I cut off all my hair with the kitchen scissors and laid it in the coffin beside him. Time for parting. He liked it long. Don't think he would've fancied it being grey though. He died just in time I reckon.

PATSY and Sharon chuckle. A rousing Dalmatian folk song is heard from out in the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN -EVENING

In both the kitchen and living room, there's a lot of wine being drunk. Musicians play a Yugoslav folk song at the kitchen table. A variety of stringed instruments are in action. Angela and Sarah are dancing to the music, lost in their reverie.

Steve helps himself to the red wine.

Harry calls across to Steve.

HARRY
There's just a few things of hers I'll be taking.

STEVE
What things?

HARRY
They won't mean anything to you. You're getting the house.

Harry and Steve stare at each other.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Just a few things to remember her by.

STEVE gulps down some more red wine.

HARRY turns his attention to Sharon, who's re-entered the kitchen. He looks her up and down. She stares boldly back at him.

SHARON
Hullo Mr Yelich. How're you shaping up?

Sharon taps Harry on the side of his head.

HARRY
Need a trim you reckon?

SHARON
Come and see me, you know where I am.

PATSY butts in with a plateful of "bush chicken"

PATSY
Chicken anyone?

ALBIE
Illegal tegal is it?

PATSY
Bush chicken. Have some.

HARRY
Not a big fan of your hangied kai.

PATSY
It's not hangi kai. It's been boiled in a pakeha pot.

PATSY offers the plate. Albie reaches over.

PATSY (CONT'D)
Never you mind. Just get it down you. Sons of vitches.

HARRY
Very persuasive aren't ya.

Harry picks out a bit of flesh and eats it. Patsy nods and moves on. Benson keeps an eye out on Patsy as she moves around the gathering.

Harry pours Sharon a glass of wine.

INT. WAKE -NIGHT

The atmosphere at the wake has become more abandoned. Steve watches it all through a drunken haze.

ANGELA
So where did all you lot come from?

HARRY
Well it wasn't Hawaiiki.

ANGELA
Where was it?

ALBIE
Croatia. You heard of it?

ANGELA
Europe isn't it?

HARRY
Somewhere over there. Well away from here.

Harry moves off to open more wine. Albie smiles at Angela.

ALBIE
Most of us were from a few villages down the Dalmatian coast, which is called Croatia now. There is no Dalmatia anymore. Mention the name, and people think you're talking about dogs that are spotted.

SARAH
One hundred and one of them. Yeah we've seen the video.

ALBIE
And the rest. Like she says all sons of vitches.

HARRY rejoins ALBIE and pours more wine.

HARRY
Let's drink to sons of vitches. Jivoli.

There's a raising of glasses and toasts shouted in different languages. Glasses are raised and the contents tossed back.

Behind the partying throng ....the kitchen door opens and Max enters followed by Old Bill, and several other members of the extended whanau.

Harry, Steve, Albie and others of Dalmatian descent stare transfixed, as Max begins speak.

MAX
Te He Mauri. Tu ake nei ki te mihi atu kia koutou.
Ka mihi hoki. Kia koe a te whaea a Edit,
Kei te mutunga toe Maemae. No ReiRa,
Haere e te whaeo
Haeri Ki to kainga tuturu e noho ana me to whanau
Kua wehe atu Ra Kapitit Hono TaTai Hono
Ki te hunga mate Kia Ratau.
Kapiti hono Tataai Hono Tatou te hunga ora ke te hunga ora.
Kia Ora my name is Max Kite and me and the whanau would just like to say, that to honour our friend Edit, we would like to be able to take her on to the marae for a night.

HARRY
What? You wanna take her with ya.

MAX
It would be an honour if she came on to the marae.

HARRY
Not to me, it wouldn't be. She's staying here!

STEVE
Mum wouldn't mind.

Harry turns sharply on Steve.

HARRY
How do you know?

STEVE
Well she wouldn't. She'd be honoured.

HARRY
Honoured my arse. Leave this to me, alright! (TURNING BACK TO MAX) Listen, she stays here tonight. Then we take her to the undertakers in the morning. That's the way we're doing things 'round here.

STEVE
"He oversees his kingdom, so no stranger does intrude."

HARRY
Shut-up!

MAX
Look we don't want to cause any ruckus here. We just wanted to pay respects to Edit. She was someone special to us. All of us.

STEVE
Yeah she was.

HARRY
OK then, pay respects, but don't take her body with yis. She's just through there.

Max leads the group through to the bedroom. Benson glares at Max, as he walks past. Benson gruffly comments to Brian.

BENSON
Remind me to get a warrant for that bastard in the morning.

Benson knocks back his whisky.

INT. STEVE'S MUMS BEDROOM -NIGHT

The group led by Max circle the coffin. Old Bill stands at one end and says a brief karakia.

Max leads the singing in Maori of the hymn. "Just A Closer Walk With Thee." There's a relaxed harmony to the voices. The group obviously enjoy singing it.

INT. CORRIDOR -NIGHT

Harry comes up behind Steve and peers into the bedroom, as the harmonized voices fill the air.

HARRY
She didn't even like that bloody song anyway.

STEVE
Would've enjoyed the harmonies.

Harry moves back to the kitchen. Steve goes out onto the porch as the singing continues. He sits beside Manu on the steps. There's a bit of a bro's handshake.

MANU
Sorry mate.

STEVE
Yeah so am I.

MANU
Had a lotta time for your mum.

STEVE
Yeah she had a soft spot for you too.

MANU
Leave a bit of a hole.

STEVE
Yeah, does. Bit of a hole in the soul.

They sit there staring out.

EXT. EDIT'S HOUSE -NIGHT

The sounds of the hymn "Just A Closer Walk With Thee" drift from the house into the night air. A bird soars into flight, flying across the landscape of the town.

Manu's eyes follow the flight of the bird.

MANU
Doesn't usually show itself at night.

Steve stands and heads back inside.

INT. STEVE'S MUMS OLD BEDROOM -NIGHT

Harry bustles along the hallway with a large bundle of Steve's mother's things. Steve looks puzzled.

STEVE
What're you want with all of her things?

HARRY
Not hers anymore. She won't need anymore than what she's wearin' where she's goin'.

HARRY clutches the clothes to his chest and marches out.

INT. WAKE -NIGHT

Steve stares around, at the few stragglers who remain. He's pretty drunk.

STEVE
Thanks ladies, don't worry about it. I'll clean up.

There's a slow stirring of people leaving the wake.

SARAH
We're gonna split if that's OK.

ANGELA
You alright?

STEVE
Alright? It's alright ma, she's only bleeding. Up to boot hill they've sent ya. How does it feel to be on your own. No direction home ....knocking on heavens door. If you see her say hullo. Tell her I've started out on her burgundy.....but there's no chance of hitting the harder stuff, not tonight. Not in Kaitaia. Twist of Fate, but it's not so simple. S'all over now Baby Blue. Guess I'm tangled up in blue. All blowing in the wind. But I'll shelter from the storm. Yeah don't think twice, it's alright. I'm alright. I'm only bleeding but I'm alright.

Sarah and Angela envelop Steve with a big hug. Steve sighs.

They pull away from the hug and stand in the doorway.

ANGELA
Be thinking of you.

STEVE
Yeah I'll be thinking of me too.

Sarah and Angela depart. Steve finds a half filled bottle and pour more wine for himself.

Steve surveys the mess in the kitchen. He lifts up the sash window to let some air into the old house. A small piece of cloth catches his eye. Snagged on a nail at the base of the window .....is a torn piece of blue serge wool. He stares drunkenly at it, not registering what it is. He picks it up and turns it over in his hands.

INT. EDIT'S BEDROOM -NIGHT

Steve walks into the bedroom ......and over to the coffin. He stands there, staring down at her for a while. He runs his finger over the bump on his mother's forehead.

STEVE
Suppose you'll be wanting a game.

Steve goes over to the wardrobe, reaches up into a shelf, finds the family chess board. He carefully takes it down.

Steve carefully sets up the ornate chess pieces ....balancing a board across the body in the coffin. Steve chats away to his dead mother.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Guess you'll want white mum, won't you. You always did.

Steve turns the board, so the white pieces face his mother's head. The game begins. The opposing pawn moves of it's own accord. Steve grins.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Even the pawn must hold a grudge.

Steve moves a black pawn forward. A white knight moves of it's own accord.

STEVE (CONT'D)
It's alright ma, I guess I don't have to lie anymore ....having met some nice girl. But there ya go .....we're not always who we seem to be, are we?

Steve studies the chessboard.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT/INT. MAX'S HOUSE -DAY

Brian and Benson walk up the steps to Max and Patsy's place. Benson boldly walks in .....Brian follows. Benson strolls over towards the kitchen. Max looks up from his easy chair and notices cops have walked in unannounced.

MAX
Hey. What the fuck are you doing man?

Opening the freezer compartment, Benson retrieves a plastic bag ... containing a brace of "bush chickens." Max frowns.

BENSON
These yours Max?

MAX
Dunno who's they are. Not mine.

BENSON
So who else uses this freezer?

Max looks at Patsy then back to the cops. Max shrugs his shoulders.

MAX
Where's your warrant?

BENSON
I think you're going to need a lawyer Max.

MAX
Haven't seen your warrant yet.

Benson gives a scornful nod.

BENSON
Bring that bag with ya, will ya Brian.

Benson walks out. Brian follows.

EXT. OUTSIDE MAX'S HOUSE -DAY

Patsy watches the police leave the house. Max stands there. He grunts at Patsy.

PATSY
For a few lousy chickens? Those boys are outa control.

Benson sticks his head back in.

BENSON
So ....you want further charges Max? Resisting arrest, assault? Refusing to accompany a police officer? Take your pick. Dump the lot on you if you want. What's it to be Max?

MAX
Your call pig.

BENSON
No need to get rural on us Max. C'mon, your chariot awaits.

Benson stuffs an official paper in Max's direction.

BENSON (CONT'D)
And by the way here's your warrant. Paperwork for ya to peruse.

Max scowls as he rips the paper out of Benson's hand.

EXT. SAWMILL -DAY

Manu is working with the forklift .....shifting timber around the yard. The FOREMAN comes over to him waving his arms to indicate the phones for him.

Manu climbs out of the cab and heads over to the boss's office.

Looking through the window the Foreman sees Manu nodding his head to whoever is on the phone. Manu puts the phone down and comes out. The boss remonstrates with Manu.

BOSS
Listen I don't want to be ya bloody secretary. Can't you get a cellphone?

MANU
I came back up north, to get away from all that.

BOSS
Not making a very good job of it then are ya.

MANU
Sorry Boss.

BOSS
Just make sure you put in the hours you take off. Not running a charity here, alright.

The boss marches off. Manu walks over to his car and heads off.

INT. SALON - DAY

Sharon's attention .....is distracted away from the glossy mag she is reading .....by visitors to the salon. Angela and Sarah appear in the doorway looking very wired.

Sharon welcomes them.

SHARON
Hi. Come in.

ANGELA
Kia Ora. You busy?

SHARON
Depends. What do you need done?

ANGELA
My hairs' been shat in.

SHARON
Shat in?

SARAH
Yeah, bird shit.

SHARON
Sure it's bird shit.

SARAH
Well it's not whale shit.

Sharon's eyebrows raise as she indicates for Angela to sit in the salon chair.

ANGELA stares wide-eyed into the salon mirror. SARAH hovers nearby. SHARON; tentatively lifts up some strands. SHARON studies the clotted bit in her hair.

Sharon's hands pull back from Angela's hair.

SHARON
What do you want me to do?

ANGELA
Cut the shit out of it.

Sharon tentatively takes the scissors from the dressing table and lops off the strands of hair with the shit on it.

SHARON
Shit out of it? Christ I thought nits were bad enough ... but this is....

It's Angela's turn to recoil in horror.

ANGELA
Nits? Who's got nits?

SHARON
Half the kids that come in here. I mean I don't cut their hair if they have but....

ANGELA
Don't touch me then.

SHARON
Eh?

ANGELA
I don't want your nits.

SHARON
They're not my nits.

ANGELA
We're outa here.

SHARON
What about yer hair?

ANGELA
You cut the shit out didn't ya?

SHARON
But it's not straight.

SARAH
Don't need to be straight.

ANGELA
Bent's fine. Shit happens. Ta.

Angela and Sarah leave. Sharon watches through the window as Sarah and Angela climb into their car.

SHARON
Bloody hell. What next?

Sharon walks off. Time for a cup of tea.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Manu walks in to the police station. He is ushered into an office where a senior police officer, Benson, sits at a desk facing Max. For a moment there's the fear that Manu has been dobbed in for the kereru .....but it's Max who is up on a charge of possession of kereru.

Benson bluntly states ....

BENSON
He reckons you're a lawyer.

MANU
I have been a lawyer, yes.

MAX
He still is a lawyer. He's not disbanded or anything.

MANU
What's the charge?

BENSON
Bag of birds. Your uncle's been doing a spot of poaching. He came across some native wood pigeon.

MAX
Found them in the bush.

BENSON
And they flew into a bag and shot themselves?

MAX
Something like that.

BENSON
Under the Wildlife Act 1953 it is an offence to hunt, kill or have in your possession the bird known as kereru. You know that?

MAX
Called kukupa up this way bro.

BENSON
You're in serious shit here Kite! So don't push it.

MAX
Pronounced Kee tay.

BENSON
Whatever.

MANU
It is kereru?

BENSON
"Course it's kereru. Very rare in these parts. Even rarer now after he's had his go.

MANU
Can I have a word with my uncle?

BENSON
Be my guest. Have as many words with him as you want.

Benson leaves the room.

MAX
You'll see me right, won't you boy.

MANU
I dunno. What have they got on you?

MAX
Bag a' birds.

MANU
How many?

MAX
(SHRUGGING)
Half a doz?

MANU
That all?

MAX
Might've been ten. Listen bails the first thing we gotta deal to here. There's that Hotere up in the marae.
Get it for me will ya!

MANU
The Hotere?

MAX
Yeah, bail aint cheap. Here ....this'll get you in.

Manu stares somewhat bemused .... as Max nonchalantly hands over a bunch of keys.

INT. KITCHEN COP STATION -DAY

Benson sips his coffee as he stares at a small video surveillance screen, that shows the interaction between Max and Manu.

Benson watches Manu leave with the set of keys. Max sits there with his arms folded. Benson smirks.

INT. EDIT'S BEDROOM -DAY

Steve wakes in his mother's bedroom .....having been lying asleep on the chair beside the body in the coffin. The remaining chess pieces lying on the board upon the body in the coffin.

Steve grunts as he slowly rises.

He stares blearily eyed at the body lying in state.

STEVE
I'd offer you a cuppa tea mum. But I dunno if you're up to it.

Steve shuffles out of the bedroom.

INT. STEVE'S MUMS KITCHEN -DAY

Steve ambles into the kitchen, where everything is still a little on the chaotic side. Half empty wine bottles on the bench. Steve finds the jug, puts it on, then searches around for the tea. He finds the old family teapot and the blue and white patterned tea container. He smiles, as he touches the blasts from the past. Tipping the tea leaves out Steve makes a fresh brew.

Steve has a flash of his mother in the kitchen making tea.

EDIT
If you're going to have a pot of tea Steven , you might as well have a real cup. More bag than tea in those teabags. A clean cup and a good teapot. That's not too much to ask is it?

STEVE
One for me. One for the pot. I did learn something after all! I'm a big boy now. So where's my pocket money? Mum?

Steve stops what he's doing and stares at the teapot.

DISSOLVE TO:

Steve's mother looks over at him.

EDIT
How many times .... I need to tell you. I give you pocket money after doing the lawns, not before.

Steve gives a wan smile. He goes over to the fridge and retrieves the milk. He sits down at the kitchen table. He looks around him, as he sups his tea. Tears well in his eyes.

STEVE
Sure mum.

Steve looks around for something to boil an egg in. He finds a pot that has an odd dent in the bottom of it. He fills this pot up with water and sets in on the stove.

Steve stares down into the egg that bubbles away in the dented pot.

DAY. EXT. OUTSIDE SCHOOL

The police car is moving down the small-town street approaching the pedestrian crossing outside the school.

KEVIN sits in the passenger seat, staring out, at the kids walking to school. Kevin winds down the window when he spots some kids he knows. He leans his hand out and gives them the middle finger in a rude gesture. BRIAN is indignant.

BRIAN
Hey Kev. Don't son.

KEVIN glares insolently back at BRIAN.

KEVIN
What's wrong now?

BRIAN
Not in my work vehicle OK.

KEVIN
Why should you care?

Brian pulls up in the police car ....across the road from the school. A little girl cooes from the car seat in the back. Kevin watches Brian scribble in his notebook.

Brian sighs as he says.

BRIAN
Try and get on with the other kids, eh son?

Kevin climbs out of the car taunting Brian with .....

KEVIN
Don't call me son. You're not my real father.

Brian is hurt by the comment.

BRIAN
Hang on Kev.

Kevin isn't looking where he's going when he runs across the road.

A car skids to a sudden halt. Brian closes his eyes, flinching at the screech of brakes. Opening his eyes ...Brian stares across the road ....and shakes his head. He climbs out of the car and runs across the road.

DAY. EXT. MAIN STREET

GEORGE; a local opportunist teenager; approaches the police car, parked across from the school

GEORGE glances into the police car and sees a notebook lying on the front seat. He reaches into the open window of the car and stuffs it down his shirt. He waves at the little girl strapped in a car seat in the back.

GEORGE
Yo sweetie. Won't tell will ya?

The young girl smiles as GEORGE saunters off.

DAY. EXT. STREET

HEPI spies GEORGE walking down the street. GEORGE is absorbed in reading something. HEPI slides his motorbike up towards GEORGE, who jumps back in alarm.

GEORGE
Shit.

HEPI
Yo, what's up?

GEORGE
Just cruisin'

HEPI
What ya got?

GEORGE
Nothing much, but you're in it.

HEPI
Eh? Give it here.

HEPI snatches the diary off GEORGE.

HEPI (CONT'D)
Shit. Pandoras box.

GEORGE
She your latest.

HEPI
Fuck off she's greek, man.

George nods. Hepi takes off on his bike, notebook clasped like a baton.

EXT. STEVE'S MUM'S HOUSE

The lawn-mower is running up and down the backyard. Steve looks up to see Uncle Harry at the back-door. Harry stands in the doorstep ....hands on hips .....glowering. Two men dressed as undertakers walk past Harry on the way inside.

STEVE
You gonna tell me what happened?

HARRY
Nothing happened. She just fell and banged her head, that's all. She always had dodgy hips.

STEVE
Not always.

HARRY
How would you know? You were never here. You don't know what she went through!

STEVE
(MUMBLING)
Says you.

HARRY
Yeah says me. The service is gonna be at the graveside. I'd prefer we had it at the church, but those were her wishes.

STEVE
Didn't think you cared about her wishes.

HARRY
Listen boy. I knew my sister a damn sight better than you did.

Steve stares hard at his uncle.

STEVE
Up yours!

HARRY
Listen I've got better things to do, than waste my time with an ungrateful shit like you.

STEVE
You're the ingrate, let it rest.

Harry walks inside. Steve starts up the mower. There's an angry shout and Harry appears at the bedroom window.

HARRY V/O
What the fuck have you been doing? You don't play games with dead bodies.

Steve shrugs.

STEVE
It's not something you'd know about. Between me and mum.

Steve starts up the mower again.

Steve continues to push the motor mower up and down the back yard. Harry oversees the men in dark suits, carrying out the coffin to the hearse.

The hearse moves out of the driveway, and slowly off down the street. Steve takes a big deep breath. An involuntary cry escapes from him. Steve stands in the middle of the backyard, a solitary figure in the suburban yard. Steve stares around him .....taking in the familiar sights ....the overgrown sand-pit ....the tree he used to climb .....the rusted basketball hoop hanging off a corner of the shed. Steve wipes his eyes and continues to mow the lawn.

INT. SHED -DAY

Steve pushes the motor mower over to the old corrugated iron shed. Steve enters the musty junk filled old shed. He gives a big sigh as he looks around.

Amidst all the blasts from the past ....he finds his mother's old pushbike. Dragging it out ....Steve sees the old pump is still clipped onto the frame. Taking the bicycle pump .....Steve proceeds to pump up the tyres and wheel the bike outside. In the basket hanging off the handlebars Steve finds what seems to be an old sock. He lifts it out. There seems to be something inside. Steve pulls out a wad of notes. Steve looks happy at the find.

STEVE
Thanks mum. Appreciate it.

Steve wheels the bike down the path.

EXT. BACKYARD -DAY

After a brief early wobble ....Steve takes control of the bicycle ....and bikes off down the side of the house and out onto the road.

INT. MARAE -DAY

Manu is in the process of removing the Hotere painting from the wall. The elderly custodian wanders over.

OLD BILL
What are you doing son?

Manu wheels around to see an elderly man keenly regarding him.

MANU
Oh Kia Ora Bill. Just getting this for Uncle Max.

OLD BILL
What does he want with it?

MANU
Bail I think.

OLD BILL
Bail?

MANU
Yeah well ..... he's got himself arrested.

OLD BILL
If it's for what I think he's been arrested for .....he can stay arrested. This painting doesn't belong to just your uncle. It was a gift to the whole iwi. He'll need permission from the marae committee and they don't meet for a few weeks.

MANU
Don't think he wants to wait that long.

OLD BILL
Sorry boy. Belongs here.

Manu steps back from the painting, nods his appreciation of it.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Benson sips a mug of tea, while watching the interaction between Max and Manu, on the small video surveillance set-up.

Benson grins as he watches Max gesturing angrily with his arms. Manu is attempting to explain that the painting has had to stay on the marae wall.

On the monitor: Max can be seen slamming his fist down on the table, shouting abuse at Manu.

MAX
Did you tell 'em who it was for? (MANU SHRUGS) And what did they say.

Manu mutters, gives an apologetic nod of his head. Max grows more and more irate.

MAX (CONT'D)
I'm the chairman for fucks sake. What's the use in being the bloody chair, if they don't do what you want. I call the shots, alright. Not them!

Manu makes an apologetic gesture with his arms.

Benson chuckles at the monitor, he folds his arms.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Manu is signing a check on behalf of his uncle's bail.

BENSON
Reckon he's worth it?

Manu continues to complete the form.

BENSON (CONT'D)
Pity about the Hotere, could've done with a dash of modern art around the place.

MANU
Anything else?

Benson gestures to Manu.

BENSON
And you can sign over here too.

Manu reaches over and signs the form.

BENSON (CONT'D)
He's all yours, if you want him.

Manu gives Benson a cold look. Max gives Benson a dismissive wave as he heads out.

MAX
Too much pork in one place. Good feed, that's what we need.

Manu follows Max out.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Brian is in somewhat of a flap, turning out his desk, trying to find his notebook. Benson stares disdainfully at Brian.

BRIAN
I'm not sure where it is.

BENSON
No-one else in the car was there?

BRIAN
Just the kids.

BENSON
Kids? You think the police is a taxi service for you and your bloody stepkids.

BRIAN
One of them's mine.

BENSON
I don't give a toss how many brats are yours.

Benson busies himself with paperwork. He doesn't look up as Brian approaches. Brian stands awkwardly before him.

BENSON (CONT'D)
No, I'm not issuing you with another.

BRIAN
Come on. What do I use to write up my notes?

BENSON
Make it up as you go along. It's what you do anyway isn't it? Just find your fuckin' notebook! And let's hope there's nothing incriminating in there.

Brian looks alarmed. He takes his jacket back off his chair, and prepares to go out.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE -DAY

Max tears a piece of flesh off the carcass of a bird. Manu stands watching him. Max continues to eat through their conversation at the table.

MAX
Just as well they didn't check the freezer in the wash house, eh?

Max chuckles. Manu looks grim.

MANU
Listen Uncle Max I'm not so sure about taking this on.

MAX
Sit down, sit down ....just got to fill you in on a few things ....(MAX STARES GRAVELY AT MANU)
We were an inland tribe ...our hapu weren't with a coastal iwi .... we didn't rely on just fish ....the kuku were our kai. We were the katiaki ....but we only took them when the miro berries were ripe. Bastards get so full they fall from the trees anyway.

MANU
That was back then.

MAX
And now boy. It's all there in the Treaty of Waitangi ....we have customary rights over forests and fisheries.

MANU
Not over protected species we don't.

MAX
Protected from who?

MANU
It's endangered ... it's on the verge of extinction. Hardly any of them left in the Far North.

MAX
Not because of me.

MANU
What kind of attitude is that ....you think we can take whatever we like?

MAX
Don't talk to me about attitude boy.

MANU
Doesn't the environment matter to you?

MAX
It's our bloody environment. Not the pakehas. We knew about conservation. Where do the whanau go when one of the old kuia wants a taste before she dies. (PAUSE) Me, that's where. I'm the bloody katiaki. You've tasted it .... haven't you?

Manu shuffles, grunts in reluctant agreement.

MANU
Yeah .....but ....

MAX
But what? It's OK. Not for us to feel guilt. They're there for us. It's a legacy from our tipuna.

MANU
Us? C'mon Uncle Max. It's not simply a maori-pakeha thing when you go out killing kereru.

MAX
Called kukupa up this way.

MANU
Whatever.

Manu walks out leaving Max sitting there. Max yells at Manu, as Manu heads out.

MAX
Where do you think you're going? We're not finished with this yet boy.

Max frowns at the open door.

INT. SHARONS SALON -DAY

The bell to the salon goes. Sharon gets up. Hepi's at the door. Fish and chips in his hand.

SHARON
It's you.

HEPI
Yo sis.

SHARON
Don't call me sis.

HEPI
Wanna chip?

Sharon sighs.

SHARON
Suppose you'll want sauce.

HEPI
Sweet. Thought you'd never ask.

Sharon leads Hepi through the salon, back into the house.

DAY. INT. SHARON'S HOUSE

Sharon and Hepi are sitting at the kitchen table. A tomato sauce bottle....is being upended into hot chips.... wrapped in newspaper. Jets of bright red sauce. Sharon watches Hepi's squeezing behaviour with distaste.

SHARON
Ya don't need to drown them.

HEPI
They'll survive.

SHARON
Know how much sugar they put in that stuff?

HEPI
Nah ....don't read labels.

SHARON
They don't even use tomatoes.

HEPI
Course they do.

SHARON
They don't. It's nearly all pumpkin.

HEPI
Pumpkin? Piss off!

SHARON
It's pumpkin alright. Didn't work at Watties for nothing.

HEPI
Tomatoes are carcinogenic anyway.

SHARON
Give it here then.

Sharon grabs the sauce and squeezes red goo in a thick puddle.

HEPI
Didn't think you liked sauce.

SHARON
Lotta things about me ya wouldn't know. So what's up?

HEPI nods and helps himself to a mouthful of chips. Nonchalantly he pulls the cops notebook out from inside his jacket, and places it on the table.

HEPI
Look what's come my way.

Sharon suspiciously regards it.

SHARON
Come your way?

HEPI
Fell into these hands.

HEPI points to a paragraph, as he continues to devour the saucy chips. Hepi reads aloud.

HEPI (CONT'D)
(READING) Acting on information receeved... visited Toopies property.
(MORE)

HEPI (CONT'D)
No-one home - entry obtayned by entering through unloched window. Blah, blah. Search revealed little in the way of drug matter, but in drawer several packets of cigarete papers found and a "quanity of timfoil." Bastard's even worse at spelling than me.

SHARON
So what is this?

HEPI
Breaking and entry. I've been done for that.

SHARON
Where'd you say you got it?

HEPI
Back of a truck. Check the load of pies and buns he puts away. Here.

Hepi points to the inventory of food.

SHARON
Two pies, two pastries, one cream bun, two pieces chocolate cake.

HEPI
And that's just one feed. Pig alright.

SHARON
Holy shit. Acting on information received. Lifted sarsh window. Quanity of canarbus seeds found in old teapot. Found choclate cake in fridge. Thick creamy icing. Delishous. You're right, he can't spell.

HEPI flicks over a couple of pages.

HEPI
Get a load of that.

SHARON
The cake?

HEPI
The address.

Sharon glances at it.

SHARON
Looks familiar.

HEPI
My address. My fuckin' birthday cake too. Knew there was more pieces left. Bastard could do with a lesson on protocol.

SHARON
And you're the man to give it to him?

HEPI
S'right.

The doorbells goes to the salon. Sharon gets up and goes to answer it.

Hepi follows her to the door.

Sharon opens the door. Steve looks a bit reticent as Hepi staunchly stands behind Sharon.

HEPI (CONT'D)
Kia Ora bro. So who are you?

SHARON
Oh Steve, this is Hepi?

HEPI
Yeah?

SHARON
He used to be from round here.

HEPI
Never seen you 'round?

STEVE
Haven't been here for years. I'm Steve.

Steve holds out his hand. Hepi lowers his head and greets Steve with a hongi. Steve closes his eyes and hongi's back. Hepi pulls back from nose to nose contact.

HEPI
Hepi. I'm Hepi. Like to know who people are eh.

SHARON
Steve's mum was a good client of mine. One of the best. Come on in. Hepi's just leaving.

Steve gives a wan smile. Hepi eyes up Steve, before thrusting the bag of chips at him.

HEPI
Have a chip mate.

STEVE
No thanks.

HEPI
Go on mate. No germs here. Have a chip.

Steve obliges and takes a chip. Hepi thrusts the whole packet into Steve's hands.

HEPI (CONT'D)
Finish 'em off. Gotta cake to bake.
Later.

Hepi tosses a final chip up into the air. Catches it in his open mouth.

Sharon and Steve watch Hepi depart, holding the notebook like a baton.

SHARON
Man on a mission.

EXT. SCHOOLGROUNDS -DAY

Brian stuffs some cake into his mouth, as walks into the schoolgrounds, wiping his face with the back of his hand. Cream lurks around the corners of his mouth. Brian walks towards the classrooms .....munching on the move.

INT. CLASSROOM -DAY

The teacher holds a chart of New Zealand native birds up.

TEACHER
So what other native birds do you know?

There's a chorus of "kiwi" from the kids.

TEACHER (CONT'D)
Apart from the kiwi?

KEVIN
Thrush.

TEACHER
That's not a native.

OTHER KID
Sparrow?

TEACHER
Neither is that.

CLAIR
The kereru.

TEACHER
That's right, the kereru, or kukupa as it's known up here. The native wood pigeon.

MARAMA
My mother eats those.

TEACHER
I'm sure she doesn't.

MARAMA
She does too.

TEACHER
OK, so anyway .....what other birds can you tell me about?

There's a chorus of keen kids voices, shouting out bird's names. Kevin stares out the window and sees Brian jumping up outside the classroom, trying to attract his attention. Soon all the pupils notice him, and point him out to the teacher. The teacher ...leaves the class and goes outside.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR -DAY

The TEACHER comes over to him, curtly addressing Brian.

TEACHER
What do you want?

BRIAN
Yeah sorry, I was wanting to have a word with Kevin.

TEACHER
Just knock on the door then. You don't have to wave your arms around outside the classroom. It's hard enough as it is....

BRIAN
Sorry.

TEACHER
Well here he comes.

Kevin hobbles over towards Brian with his leg in plaster, now using crutches to get around on.

BRIAN
Have you got my notebook?

KEVIN
No.

BRIAN
I need it for work.

KEVIN
Haven't got it.

BRIAN
You'd tell me if you had it wouldn't you.

KEVIN
Yeah.

BRIAN
Good.

KEVIN
You know those birds you said people shoot?

BRIAN
The kereru?

KEVIN
Girl in my class says she eats them.

BRIAN
Which girl?

Kevin shrugs.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Maori or pakeha?

Kevin shrugs his shoulders again. Looks back to the classroom.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Maori eh? Tell me later then Kev. Thanks mate.

KEVIN
For what, tryin' to shame me in front of my mates.

BRIAN
Look sorry Kev. Didn't mean to ....

KEVIN
Yeah, whatever.

A hurt looking BRIAN ....watches KEVIN walk away.

INT. HEPI'S HOUSE -DAY

George, a younger sidekick of Hepi's, sidles into the kitchen to find Hepi in serious cake making mode.

GEORGE
Yo, what's up?

HEPI
Pick a few flowers for me bro.

GEORGE
Kinda flowers?

HEPI
Know the house on the corner. Dark one ....back from the road.

GEORGE
Yeah?

HEPI
Yeah well that tree that hangs over the road. I want you to pick some of those flowers ....yellow and white bastards... give you this for your troubles ....

Hepi passes over a cigar shaped piece of tinfoil.

GEORGE
Yo. Sweet.

George heads back out.

INT. SHARONS KITCHEN -DAY

Steve and Sharon are sharing a pot of tea.

The salon door alerts Sharon to the presence of a customer.

SHARON
Shit, must be a customer. Wait here if you like.

Sharon leaves Steve at the table.

INT. SHARONS SALON -DAY

Sharon breezily enters the salon. Sharon greets Harry with familiarity.

SHARON
Mr Yelich. What a surprise. Not a bad day out there?

HARRY
Not a bad day at all Sharon.

SHARON
I thought Edit was looking lovely laid out.

HARRY
Makes a good corpse, thanks to you.

SHARON
She was a good customer, your sister. So you after a trim?

HARRY
No well ....not really .....there was ...ahrr ....something else I thought you might help me with.

SHARON
Sure, what's that?

HARRY
I was interested in ....ahrr purchasing a wig. Do you know how I might ....you know ....go about it.

SHARON
A toupee, you mean. I don't really handle that sort of thing ....you might be advised to check on the net.

HARRY
Not that sort. I was thinking about a black bob?

SHARON
Black bob?

HARRY
Yeah but don't say anything will you? Between you and me. It's for a kinda .....special occasion.

Sharon stares perplexed at Harry.

EXT. SALON -DAY

Sharon waves good-bye to Harry. Returns to the kitchen.

SHARON
He's a dark horse your uncle Harry.

Steve nods.

STEVE
Very dark.

SHARON
Wanna stay for some kai?

STEVE
Got enough?

SHARON
Heaps. You eat kina?

STEVE
Maybe I should go.

SHARON
Paua. Scallops?

STEVE
Maybe I should stay. I'll get some of Mum's wine to go with it.

Sharon nods.

SHARON
Still some left?

STEVE
Heaps.

SHARON
Choice.

Steve has got to his feet. Sharon reaches over and gives him a hug.

SHARON (CONT'D)
She's gone to a good place bro. She'll be fine.

Steve hugs Sharon tight.

EXT. HOUSE -DAY

A hand pulls a curtain back. The figure of George is seen sneaking up a paved driveway. The curtain is released.

A hand is seen dialling the police.

EXT. TREE -DAY

George is up the tree, picking datura flowers .... shoving them down the front of his hoodie. A police car pulls up below on the street. George scrambles around the trunk, out of sight of the drive, up into the cover of the upper branches.

George watches Brian jump out of the police car and walk beneath him ....up the driveway towards the house.

As soon as Brian is out of sight, George scrambles back down the tree, runs off up the street.

EXT. OLD BIDDYS HOUSE -DAY

Brian knocks on the door and an elderly woman comes to the door.

WOMAN
I saw someone up a tree.

BRIAN
What?

WOMAN
Up my tree. Shouldn't be there, should they? Not up that kind of tree.

BRIAN
Which kinda tree?

WOMAN
That one down there. The evil one.

The Woman points down the drive. Brian looks around towards the aforementioned tree. Brian walks back down the path, staring up into the tree on his way. His feet trample over the flowers that have fallen onto the path.

EXT. STREET -DAY

George stoops, as he runs back along the street towards Hepi's house ...flowers slipping out from his sweatshirt.

Steve whistles as he wobbles along on the street on his bike. George stops running when he sees Steve biking towards him. Steve nods at George. George keeps his head down and walks furtively past.

Steve bikes further down the street, sees the police car parked outside the house, with the overhanging Datura tree.

Steve stares at the policeman. Brian returns the stare. They watch each other for a brief moment.

INT. HEPIS -DAY

George scurries back into where Hepi is preparing the baking mixture.

GEORGE
Never seen you as a cook.

HEPI
Shit yeah, used to be a chef. They want homebaking. I'll give 'em homebake.

Hepi takes the flowers from George and grinds them up in a mortar and pestle. The flowers are soon crushed into a paste. Hepi scrapes out the paste into a bowl, adding this to his cake mixture.

Hepi grimly continues with his kitchen concoction.

EXT. SCHOOL -DAY

Brian sits in the police car.

The CB radio crackles into action.

VOICE OVER RADIO
Yeah Brian there's been a P lab reported.
Take down this address.
109 Oruru Rd. You got that?

Brian flicks his pen out of his pocket in a time honoured routine ....but finds he has no notebook. He finds he has to write it on the back of his hand. Brian is flustered.

Brian finds the pen doesn't write too easily on the back of his hand.

BRIAN
Hang on. What was the number again?

VOICE OVER RADIO
Not like you Brian. 109 Oruru.

Brian digs into his skin with his pen, going over the letters 109. This action causes some discomfort.

BRIAN
Fuck bureaucracy. Fuck it.

He wrings his sore hand before starting the car up.

EXT. STREET -DAY

Brian does a sudden u turn from where he's parked and speeds off.

EXT. STREET -DAY

Hepi and George wait outside the house ..... observe Brian arrive .....screech to a halt ....jump out of the car ...and rush up to the house.

Brian goes around the house to the back door. It's unlocked so he goes inside.

INT. OLD CAR -DAY

Hepi and George look up towards the house where Brian is.

GEORGE
How'd you get it to rise like that?

HEPI
'Pends on the eggs. Free range are best. Touch of baking soda eh ... not too much ...you don't want to ruin a good cake with dragon breath ...and the mortar and pestle ....gotta pound it right .... Prick better be hungry. So who's wheels?

George shrugs.

GEORGE
Dunno. Didn't ask.

Hepi nods. George nods. There's a thumping on the roof. They look out to see Max staring in at them.

MAX
What's up?

HEPI
Nothing.

MAX
Nothing?

HEPI
Nothing much. Wanna read?

MAX
Read what?

HEPI
Dunno. But you're in it.

Hepi passes the rolled up notebook to Max. Max taps it on the car roof.

MAX
Good for you. Keep those bastards busy eh? Less pressure on us oldies then.

Max snorts as he walks off.

INT. OLD HOUSE -DAY

COP BRIAN cautiously moves into the kitchen. Looking around, he notices the flash looking fridge. Brian steps over towards the fridge and opens it. Inside the yellow light of the fridge .....sits an irresistible looking chocolate cake, cut into segments. COP BRIAN can't resist the temptation. He smiles, and reaches for the biggest creamiest piece. He chomps into it with obvious delight.

In the white light of the fridge ....Brian gazes about his surrounds.

There's a white rim of cream around Brian's lips, as he peers about.

INT. SHARONS SALON -DAY

Steve, Manu, Sharon and Marama are eating at the table. Marama stares sulkily at her mother.

MARAMA
My teacher wouldn't believe we eat kereru.

SHARON
We don't.

MARAMA
What was that the other night then?

SHARON
Chicken. Manu was given it. Weren't you Manu?

MANU
Yip.

MARAMA
That wasn't chicken. Where'd you get it from then?

SHARON
Not from Pak n' Save. Listen Marama, I told you there's some things you don't blab about at school. You don't blab on about dope and you don't go on about what we eat.

MARAMA
Why not?

SHARON
'Cause you'll get your mum in the shit that's why not.

Marama sulkily eats a mouthful of food.

INT. SHARON'S SALON -NIGHT

Sharon and Steve sit in chairs facing the mirror, large glasses of red wine in hand. Sharon sucks on the smoke as she stares at her reflection in the mirror.

SHARON
You know what I reckon?

STEVE
What?

SHARON
If you stare at your reflection long enough, your ancestors will end up looking back at you. They're in us all.

STEVE
All of them?

SHARON
All of who?

STEVE
Ancestors?

SHARON
Not all of them .....just the ones you have some infinity with.

Sharon passes the joint to Steve. He slowly inhales the smoke.

STEVE
Infinity? Who shares infinity with you then Sharon?

SHARON
What family?

STEVE
Yeah.

SHARON
My dad ..... sometimes my nana. And sometimes ....I get ....like a rush of someone way back .... way further back down the whakapapa.

STEVE
How far back?

SHARON
Don't know. But they're whanau bro. They're looking at us ....looking out for us all.

The joint is passed back to Sharon. Steve and Sharon continue to stare into the mirror.

STEVE
Mum's been looking out for me.

SHARON
What'd she been saying?

STEVE
This and that.

SHARON
Like what?

STEVE
Like how to make a cuppa tea.

SHARON
Tea? Very profound.

STEVE
Well she was fussy about that sort of thing. One for the person. One for the pot. Bit of a sacrament for her to make a pot of tea.

SHARON
Make yourself useful then bro. Milk and two for me.

Sharon chuckles. Steve stands up, bows and heads out. Sharon continues to stare at herself in the mirror.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Yip Nana's back. Kia Ora nana.

Sharon waves at herself in the mirror. Steve walks out.

EXT. SAWMILL -DAY

Manu is sitting in the cab of his forklift .... eating a meat pie .... while reading the notebook that's propped up on the steering wheel.

His boss stares over at him from the office doorway, hands on hips. Manu is oblivious to him watching.

The boss yells out. Manu nods, stores the notebook away. Manu manoeuvres the forklift around the yard, goes about his work.

EXT. MILL -DAY

The white Valiant comes lumbering into the yard where Manu is working. The Foreman indicates where Max can find Manu. Max walks over towards him. The Foreman stands hands on hips glowering after him.

Manu stares down from the forklift at the large frame of Max.

MAX
Want a word. Need a korero.

Manu climbs down out of the cab. He stands facing Max.

MAX (CONT'D)
There's a few things we need to sort out here. Your scholarships didn't count for fuck all. The whole family got in behind you going to law school.
(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)
All that shit that went down with your mate and those plants. But your nanna thought you were worth something boy, so we all pitched in. We didn't do that so you could piss about in a bloody saw-mill.

MANU
Wouldn't say it was pissing about.

MAX
You'd better start realizing what colour your blood is. Got something for you in the car. Show ya.

Max turns and walks over to the white valiant. He flips the boot and unravels the shotgun wrapped in a blanket. He passes it ceremoniously to Manu.

MANU
What's this for?

MAX
There's a coupla shots in there. That's all your father would have needed. Find out what's it all about. Then come and see me. And just remember .....the kereru called when you were born. That means something 'round here.

MANU
Hang on ....

Max thrusts the rolled up notebook at Manu.

MAX
And read this. We'll talk later. Meetings organized with the marae committee. Things are happening, don't you worry. Won't let those bastards get the better of us.

Max turns and climbs back into the car. He drives off leaving Manu holding the gun wrapped in a blanket, and the notebook.

The Foreman looks curiously at Manu. Man walks quickly away .....with the gun as unobtrusive as he can manage.

EXT. EDIT'S HOUSE -DAY

Steve stands at the door to his mother's house. He rummages in his pockets but can't find the key anywhere.

He looks around for where his mother used to leave the key, under the pot plant. The pot plant is broken ....and there is no key. He moves over to the sash window and lifts it up.

Steve climbs through, but snags his pants while climbing inside. He looks down at the offending nail. There is the piece of blue serge material hanging from the nail. He sits in that straddled position ....thinking.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. MANU'S CAR -DAY

The road signs point up towards the Honeymoon Valley. Manu drives past stands of native trees, growing tall up close to the roadway.

Manu drives further up the valley, towards the marae.

INT. POLICE CAR - DAY

COP BRIAN brings his patrol car to a clumsy halt, down a country road.

Everything seems to have gone a bit hazy. He shakes his head trying to clear his befuddled brain. He stares in wonder at a passing vehicle .....passing by in eerie slow motion. He hugs himself as though he's suddenly cold. Brian veers back out onto the road and follows the car.

INT. MANU'S CAR -DAY

Manu looks in the rear vision mirror to see the police car weaving along behind him. Without moving his head ....Manu makes sure the gun is stored out of sight ....covered by a blanket ....tucked under the back seat.

Manu takes a deep breath as the lights of the police car go on indicating for Manu to pull over. Manu pulls over.

EXT. ROADSIDE -DAY

Manu stands outside his car as Brian walks back towards him. Brian looks at the car and what appears to be four shapes are sitting in the car .....for a while they look like burly men .....Brian blinks hard when their appearance changes into something more sinister. Evil looking red eyes seem to be gazing at Brian.

BRIAN
So where are you fellas all going?

MANU
Us fellas?

BRIAN
Yeah you guys.

MANU
There's just me.

BRIAN
Is there?

Brian looks again at the car and sees no-one else in the car. Brian quickly shakes his head.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Urghh. There's not a ....that's not a ......?

MANU
What are you on about?. You want to see my license or not?

BRIAN
Ummm, sure. Yeah that'd be good.

MANU
Here it is then.

Manu hands his license over. Brian stares down at it. The writing is a blur to him. Brian gives it back. Fumbling with the Breathalyzer kit, Brian awkwardly holds it out.

BRIAN
Do you mind ahrr ....?

MANU
You want me to blow into it?

BRIAN
Yeah.

MANU
Why?

BRIAN
Blow .....blow hard. Make my day.

Manu takes the bag, blows hard into it and hands the inflated bag back.

Brian stares in horror at the Breathalyzer which has taken on the appearance of an inflated frog, and seems to be floating in the air. Brian stares goggle eyed at it.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Wow.

MANU
Is that all?

BRIAN
I think so. Yes. Can't think of anything else. No. Amazing isn't it? Thank-you. Thank you very much.

Brian's attention is taken by the Breathalyzer bag seemingly floating off into space.

MANU
Righto.

Manu leaves Brian standing holding the Breathalyzer, turning it over and over in his hands, seemingly marvelling at it. Manu sighs as he hops back into his car. The hotrod hoons off up the road. A cloud of gravel descends on Brian.

INT. MANU'S CAR -DAY

Glancing into the rear vision mirror Manu sees Brian in the middle of the road, throwing up the Breathalyzer and catching it ....seemingly lost in a rugby reverie.

EXT. ROADSIDE -DAY

Brian catches the Breathalyzer, and runs up the road with it. He punts the Breathalyzer high up into the air and tries to catch it. He catches it on the full, and runs further up the road. Brian adopts a position as though he's about to be tackled by a rampant forward pack. A whistle seems to blow from somewhere. Brian signals that he'll take the kick for goal. Brian gathers stones for a kicking tee, places the Breathalyzer on top ....carefully paces out some steps ....runs forward and kicks ....the bag sails up into the air. Sails between the posts to Brian's way of thinking. Brian cheers the kick on.

EXT. ROAD BESIDE BUSH -DAY

Manu climbs out of the car. He takes the gun from off the passenger seat. He walks off into the bush.

EXT. BUSH - DAY

Manu sits with the gun on his lap .....staring up into the trees.

EXT. TREETOPS -DAY

A plump kukupa comes to rest in the grove of trees. It sits calmly on it's perch. Manu takes his time before raising the gun to his shoulder and taking aim.

THE KUKUPA IS SEEN THROUGH THE SIGHTS OF THE GUN.

The kereru calls .....before helping itself to a feed of miro berries.

Manu's finger is on the trigger.

EXT. ROADSIDE -DAY

A rifle shot echoes around the hillsides. Brian looks worried. The breathalyzer tucked under his arm ....Brian zigzags his way back to the police car. Brian hops in the car. The three point turn is clumsy. It has more like five or six goes.

EXT. BUSH - DAY

Manu watches the soaring flight of the plump native wood pigeon .....swooping across the valley to a further stand of native trees.

MANU
Eat hard. Play hard bro. Don't let me get in your way. Go for it.

Manu lowers the gun.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

BENSON; stands above a young woman officer. Their attention is to the police radio.

DET. BENSON
Tell him to get his arse back in to town. Anything else?

COUTTS
Yeah there is .... he mentioned some kind of ...giant moths.

DET. BENSON
(SCATHINGLY)
Giant moths.

COUTTS
That's what he said. Giant moths.

DET. BENSON
Fuck sake. Tell him to turn his bloody lights off then.

The young officer shrugs her shoulders before returning her attention to the microphone .....

COUTTS
Yeah Brian. Are you there Brian? Have you tried your lights? (LISTENING TO REPLY) Yeah your lights. Is that any good?

Coutts waits for a reply .....waits a while.

INT. POLICE CAR -NIGHT

The CB radio appears to be whispering malevolently at him.

VOICE OVER RADIO
Brian? Are you still there Brian?

Cars track by outside ....long term exposure blur of stripes of headlights.

Brian stares at the CB radio in his police car.

Brian huddles away from it. He jumps back as the voice from the police station crackles.

VOICE OVER RADIO (CONT'D)
Brian? Come in Brian.

Brian looks at his face in the rear vision mirror. It's not a face he recognizes ....staring back at him. The face distorts as he looks at it ....into something animalistic. Brian shakes his head .... trying to clear his befuddled brain.

Brian gazes fixedly at his hand, holding it up in front of his eyes. All the veins and arteries seem to be illuminated ....like lights on a Christmas tree. He stares fascinated at his glowing hand. He moves it about in slow circles, observing the pattern it makes.

When he takes his hand away from in front of his face....Brian is alarmed to see that giant moths staring in through the windscreen. The two large shapes don't seem exactly friendly.

EXT. POLICE CAR -NIGHT

C/U of giant moths, looking inside the windscreen of the police car.

BRIAN stares back in horror at the giant moths. He scrambles out of the car, baton at the ready.

EXT. STREET -NIGHT

Car headlights of the police car blaze into the night. Brian has adopted a matrix like position .....on the bonnet of the car ....swatting at giant moths.

A car approaches and Brian leaps out into the middle of the road ....swatting at the air with his baton. The car is forced to take evasive action.

INT. ANGELA'S CAR -DAY

There's alarm on the faces of the occupants, as the car skids along the fringe of the road.

ANGELA
What's he on about?

SARAH
Maybe it's his routine.

GEORGE
Routine?

SARAH
Dance routine. We've all got one inside us all.

GEORGE
Not me sisters.

ANGELA
We all do. Whales do. Doplhins do. It's a mammal thing to dance.

Sarah, Angela and George scramble out of the car.

EXT. ROADSIDE -NIGHT

Sarah, Angela and George gape at Brian, who continues to move in strange martial arts fashion ...in the middle of the road. Angela and Sarah turn surprised, as George suddenly darts off into the shadows.

George makes his way around to the police car. George chooses his moment to make a dash for the police car. Swiftly reaching into the police car, George fiddles with a couple of switches. Suddenly the siren, and lights start up. Blue light sweeps around the surrounds.

GEORGE slinks quickly away. BRIAN continues to swat the air as the siren blares. Blue flashing light swirls around.

Brian appears to be lost in a "Matrix" reverie.

Angela and Sarah watch this unexpected entertainment with wrapped attention.

SARAH
Way cool.

ANGELA
Awesome.

SARAH
Go dude. This cop's got moves.

George tries his hand at flicking matches at the petrol tank. Angela and Sarah wave him back. George flicks another match. This time it's on target. Suddenly there's a whoosh of flame. The police car becomes a fireball. Brian runs off up the road. The others turn and run back to their car. Brian stands watching the car heading off into the night as his patrol car burns.

INT. PUB -DAY

Max is sitting on a stool, in what seems to be a regular position for him at the hotel bar. Manu sidles over towards Max.

MAX
Sit down. Sit down.

Manu pulls up a stool beside Max.

MAX (CONT'D)
So how did it go?

MANU
It didn't.

MAX
Have to show you how it's done then.

MANU
I don't think so. Listen you should be able to get legal aid, Uncle Max. This just isn't something I think I want to take on ....be involved in at all.

MAX
I don't need legal aid.

MANU
Listen, I'll see if I can track down a local barrister .....I mean you're right in that .....that notebook doesn't put the cops in a good light. But we can't use it in court.

MAX
Why not? Don't fob me off, boy. This is a family obligation you're looking at here. I'm not s just someone who's walked in off the street. I'm as close as you've got to family, now your ol' man's not around. Sit down and have a drink.

Manu reluctantly obliges.

MAX (CONT'D)
Have I raped or maimed someone?

MANU
No but ....

MAX
There ya go and you've been in court for them, haven't you? That All Black you got off the rape charge. You think this is worse?

MANU
No but it was my job then to ....

MAX
And this is your job too. Throw their words back in their faces. You'll be sorted out, don't you worry.

MANU
(SIGHING)
By the marae committee?

MAX
Why not? I don't sit on committees ....just to scratch my arse. Here take this. Might need to get hold of you.

Max hands Manu a cellphone ....before pouring himself another glass from the jug ....and filling a glass for Manu.

MANU
I don't need it. Left that all behind.

MAX
You do for me. I might need to get hold of you. Not gonna be fucked around by laws telling me what's kaupapa about the kukupa. I've got as much right to that bird as anyone. Sacred to me ya know.

Manu gives a resigned nod before knocking back the beer.

INT. SHARONS SALON -NIGHT

Sharon is glaring down at Marama.

SHARON
Turn it off I said.

MARAMA
It's not finished.

SHARON
I don't care. You've watched enough.

MARAMA
Just till the end.

SHARON
No. Bed. Now.

Manu goes to kitchen. Sharon goes to TV and turns it off.

SHARON (CONT'D)
I'll turn it off myself then.

MARAMA
Oh mum!

Marama storms off in a huff. Sharon turns back to the chessboard, that Steve has set out on the kitchen table.

SHARON
So why do you have to start with those little guys, can't you just move those horsey things?

STEVE
You can if you want to ....but if you want to be defensive about it ...you use pawns ....

SHARON
Who's being defensive?

STEVE
The pawns .....they're your defense. They protect your bigger boys .....they're like your privates .....

SHARON
Your privates?

STEVE
And the others are like your officers, your priests, and your generals ....

SHARON
Privates and genitals? Thought you said it was a simple game bro.

STEVE
It is. You just have to know what everyone does.

SHARON
Well if I knew that.....I wouldn't have ended up here.

The chess game is further down the path. Steve reaches over and fills Sharon's wine glass.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Better see to Marama.

STEVE
Seems to see to herself pretty well.

SHARON
She's had to .....been through a few would be dads in her time.

STEVE
What about the real one?

SHARON
Real one never read the job description.

STEVE
What's it entail?

SHARON
Being a damn sight nicer than the other bastards that came my way.

Sharon chuckles, as Steve clinks glasses with her. Sharon gets up.

Steve hunches over the board ..... deciding what move to make. The white queen looks restless. It appears to be moving around in it's square, champing at the bit.

It moves across and shunts it's own castle off the board. Sharon looks a little startled.

STEVE
Suppose you couldn't give me a ride?

SHARON
Where to?

STEVE
Harry's.

The queen ceases to move and stands still. Steve nods, ...collects his jacket from the back of a chair and heads out.

EXT. STEVE'S MUM'S HOUSE -DAY

Steve finds the old pushbike leaning up against a bush and pedals off into the night.

INT. HARRY'S HOUSE -DAY

There's a roaring fire in Harry's stately lounge. Albie Patricovich is bowing the double bass. He looks up somewhat startled by the appearance of Harry attired in Edit's clothes.

ALBIE
My giddy aunt.

HARRY
What do you think?

ALBIE
Holy fuckin' Moly.

HARRY
Don't you like it?

ALBIE
I dunno .....

HARRY
Surprise you?

ALBIE
Yeah did a bit.

HARRY
So what do you think?

ALBIE
I think I preferred your sister in them.

Albie chuckles as he continues to bow on the double bass.

Harry swans over to the fireplace .....he elegantly pours himself a glass of good red wine, turns to a mirror and admires the long stylish black coat he is dressed in. Harry pouts his lips .....admiring his reflection.

EXT. HARRY'S HOUSE -DAY

Through a gap in the lush curtains .....Steve peers into the window of his uncle Harry's house. It takes Steve a while before he recognizes Harry in his outfit. His jaw drops.

Harry is leaning up against the fireplace .... full glass of red wine in hand, looking very much the dame. In the corner of the room .....Albie Patricovich is bowing away on the double bass.

Steve moves quietly around the house, towards Harry's bedroom.

Finding the sliding door unlocked ... Steve slips inside Harry's bedroom.

INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM -NIGHT

Music from the living room wafts through the house. The usual occupant of this bedroom is obviously fastidious, things laid out 'just so." But the decor could be regarded as tacky.

On the bed ....several of the outfits belonging to Steve's mum are carefully laid out.

Steve holds up the clothes of his mother's ....feeling the material.

INT. HARRY'S HOUSE -NIGHT

An Alsatian, sleeping by the fire, suddenly raises it's head. It cocks it's head and listens for a sound that seems to come from the direction of the bedroom. Harry observes it's reaction.

HARRY
What is it Wolfgang?

The Alsatian begins to growl.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Someone there? Go fetch.

The dog leaps up barking and charges out of the room. The dog bounds down the hallway, towards the bedroom.

INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM -NIGHT

Steve is mobilized by the rapidly approaching dog. Grabbing what he can collect in his arms of his mother's clothes.....he takes off out the door.

EXT. HARRY'S HOUSE -NIGHT

Steve partly obscured by the pile of clothes in his hands, just manages to close the sliding door in time.

The dog leaps up against the glass salivating at the window.

Steve doesn't waste time in hightailing it out of there.

Harry appears. He looks suspiciously out into the dark. He opens the sliding door and releases the Alsatian.

HARRY
Get him Wolfgang. Get him.

The Alsatian rushes out into the dark.

EXT. VINEYARDS -DAY

Flood lights are switched on. Harry fires a warning shot into the air.

Steve runs down a row in the vineyard. It's been years since he's had to run this fast. Breathing is hard. His look is scared. The bundle of clothes, doesn't make things any easier.

Giving an anxious look behind .....he is horrified to see the dog bounding down the row behind him. Steve curses.

STEVE
Fuck a duck!

Steve runs down the avenue of vineyards. The dog is way behind ....but gaining on him. Steve runs as though his life depends on it ....which may be quite true.

INT. V DUB ON COUNTRY ROAD -NIGHT

Angela and Sarah are cruising down the country road in cheerful mood, giving George a ride home.

GEORGE
Salmonella? That's a bug isn't it?

ANGELA
Dub, that's a band.

SARAH
You know Black Seeds?

GEORGE
Like sinsimilla?

SARAH
You've got pot on the brain.

GEORGE
Yeah I'm into Marley eh.

ANGELA
He's ancient.

GEORGE
Ancient? Nah man, might be dead, but he's not ancient.

Car headlights are seen up ahead.

EXT. FENCELINE -NIGHT

Steve throws the clothes over the fence, dives through the wire, just before the dog arrives. The dog goes bounding along to the gate, where it leaps over, and comes bounding along towards him.

Steve scrambles along the road with the bundle of clothes. Sharon opens the door just in time. Steve scrambles into the car clutching the clothes to his chest.

Sharon pulls out onto the road and takes off at speed. The dog bounds down the road in pursuit of them.

Angela tries to take evasive action, from the car that pulls out suddenly. Too late they see the dog. The car swerves ....tyres screech.

Angela screams. The dog hits the car with a thump. There's a loud dog yelp.

INT. ANGELA'S CAR -NIGHT

The occupants stare stunned at the dog on the bonnet.

GEORGE
Rooted.

ANGELA
Is it still alive?

GEORGE
Not by much.

SARAH
Get it off.

ANGELA
How?

SARAH
Try the wipers.

Angela operates the windscreen wipers. There's a jet of water over the windscreen. The wipers swing into action. A red tinge merges with the water. The dying dog is seen through the wipers sprawled on the bonnet. Angela backs the car and the dog slides off the bonnet onto the road.

ANGELA
What're we gonna do?

GEORGE
We?

SARAH
Get out of here.

ANGELA
And leave it like that.

SARAH
How else are we gonna leave it?

GEORGE
Make sure it's dead. Give it a squash.

Angela drives the car over the dog. There's a crunching of bones as the wheels go over.

SARAH
Jesus.

ANGELA
That's gross.

GEORGE
Squashed alright.

The car heads off ....leaving the dying dog on the road.

INT. ROADSIDE -NIGHT

Manu is driving down the country road. The headlights pick out a prone form lying on the roadway. He brings the car to a skidding halt. He leaves the headlights on and climbs out.

EXT. ROADSIDE -NIGHT

Harry and Albie shuffle along the roadside to where the dead dog is lying in a pool of blood. Tears well in Harry's eyes.

HARRY
Wolfgang. What have they done to you?

Harry turns accusingly to Manu.

HARRY (CONT'D)
You bastard.

MANU
Me? What've I done?

HARRY
Didn't you see him?

MANU
That's why I stopped. It's in pain, man.
You've got to put it out of it's misery.

HARRY
Me?

A few sobs blurt out of Harry. He stares grief stricken down at the dog.

Manu goes back to the car and collects Max's old rifle. He brings it back. He offers it to Harry but Harry pulls away.

MANU
Someones gotta do it.

Manu cocks the rifle and aims at the dog's head. A shot rings out.

EXT. ROADSIDE -NIGHT

Albie comes up behind Harry and puts his arm around him. They stand there .....shoulder to shoulder ....staring down at the body of the dog. Harry rests his head on Albie's shoulder. Manu watches them.

ALBIE
She'll be right.

HARRY
Like hell it will.

MANU
C'mon let's pick it up.

HARRY
Like this?

MANU
Look if it was so bloody special, you want to give it a decent burial don't ya.

Manu gently lifts up the dog and offers it to Harry. Harry looks aghast.

MANU (CONT'D)
Your bloody dog. Give it some dignity in death. We all deserve that much.

Harry stands there struggling under the weight of the dead dog. He staggers off with it.

EXT. STREET -NIGHT

Steve climbs out of Sharon's car.

SHARON
You gonna be alright.

STEVE
We shall see.

SHARON
Well better get back.

Sharon drives off. Steve slowly walks up the driveway.

EXT. HALL -NIGHT

A country hall looms up ahead. Brian stumbles towards it. Brian fumbles around with a large ring of keys ....takes a while to find the right one and inserts it into the lock. Once found, Brian gropes for the keyhole.

The key finally turns. Brian stumbles into the foyer of the old wooden hall.

INT. FOYER/HALL -NIGHT

The walls of the foyer are filled with Dalmatian memorabilia. Photos of kauri felling and gum digging.

Stern Dalmatian matriarchs and patriarchs stare out from the walls. The photos appear to be moving.

The shapes in the photographs leave the frames on the wall.

Dusty shapes of old gum diggers photos follow Brian into the hall.

INT. HALL -NIGHT

Moonlight sends silver slivers across the dusty wooden floors. Brian moves maniacally around the hall piling all the furniture .....into the middle of the hall.

BRIAN
Stay away from me. I didn't touch her. The fridge killed her, not me. Man the barricades. Gotta man the barricades.

Chairs, benches, trestles and tables are piled higher, and higher, reaching up like a pyramid towards the roof.

Voices call to him ....in Croatian.

Brian scrambles awkwardly over the jumble of furniture, to the top. Brian crouches down at the top of the pile. Holding a broom as a sword, Brian prepares to ward off the perceived attackers.

Brian peers out from his vantage point.

Around the outside of the hall .....a ghostly circle of Dalmatians are move around the outer rim of the hall, staring up at him. They seem to be from another era. Their countenance is grim. Spades and pitchforks are in their hands.

Sombre deep stringed instruments provide a rhythmic beat. The figures move ....arms over each other's shoulders ....around the man atop the pyramid in the centre of the hall.

Brian braces himself .... bunkered down, in a little space at the top of the furniture mountain ...holding his broomstick like a gun.

The figures move closer. In their hands are burning torches. The figures continue to circle the furniture mountain. Dalmatian orchestra music surges on. Fire seems to grow stronger. Brian uses his broom like a bayonet, trying to ward off attackers.

The encroaching flame of a torch fills the frame.

INT. KITCHEN -NIGHT

The clothes are piled up on the kitchen table. Steve takes his time to make a pot of tea. He deliberates over each step of the way. There's a knock at the door. Steve goes to answer it.

Manu follows Steve into the kitchen, rolled up notebook in his hands.

MANU
So how have you been?

STEVE
Better for seeing your sister.

MANU
Well she thought you might like to see this.

Manu hands over the notebook.

MANU (CONT'D)
Keep it. I've photocopied the bits I need.

STEVE
You wanna cup of tea. I think I've finally nailed the recipe.

MANU
Better shoot off. Got an uncle to organize.

Manu departs. Steve sits with the cup of tea and the mound of his mother's clothes. He turns the pages of the notebook till he comes to the entry mentioning his mother's address.

Steve's finger runs along the entry as he takes it in.

He goes over it again. He looks at the calendar hanging on the wall, then back to the notebook, where the date is clearly seen.

Steve stares ahead trying to piece things together.

FADE TO:

INT. HALL -DAY

Brian is sleeping on top of the furniture mountain.

Shafts of white sunlight illuminate his face.

Noises of traffic from outside. Brian opens his eyes .....trying to comprehend where he is. Vision is blurred.

Brian touches the wooden construction around him. It all feels foreign.

Heavy footsteps across the floor. Max has come to the hall to set things up for the meeting.

MAX
What the hell do you think you're doing?

Brian shrugs his shoulders and shakes his head, not quite sure himself. He tumbles down to the floor. Max looks disdainfully at him.

MAX (CONT'D)
You're a bloody disgrace, you are.

Brian groans as he stumbles for the faint light entering his vision .....which seems to be the door.

EXT. STREET -DAY

Brian stumbles down the steps into the light of day. He falls onto the ground. He picks himself up. He stumbles on up the street. Max comes to the doorway of the hall and watches Brian swaying off up the street.

INT. HALL -DAY

Max has arranged the furniture into more orderly fashion. Members of the Marae committee meet under the shadow of the furniture mountain. Max is on his feet addressing those gathered.

MAX
Thanks for agreeing to meet here under urgency, and with all the building going on down at the marae. So let's get it underway.(COUGHS) As the tangata whenua .... traditional sources of food should be open to us, to do with it, as we see fit .....not because some pakeha law dictates we're criminals for catching out own kai. We are the katiaki of our forests, not them. What are they going to do next? Stop us fishing? Take the foreshore, empty out the toheroa beds. I don't want to be out on a limb here. I want to know I have the support of the whole iwi behind me. Is that clear?

OLD BILL
That's for the committee to decide.

MAX
Let's get it decided then.

GLENDA
I'd just like to make it clear. I think you all know, there's not so many kuku left in the north is there?

OLD BILL
We have some figures here ....somewhere. Hang on.

A woman rustles through some paper and hands one over to Old Bill. Old Bill fiddles with his glasses as he reads the data.

OLD BILL (CONT'D)
Yes here it is. There's been a ....70% decline in the population in this area. There's only a 10% success rate for breeding, so most birds are dying before they can have chicks.

GLENDA
These figures are for the kukupa?

OLD BILL
Just the kukupa, yes.

MAX
The rest aren't worth eating. Kuku's the KFC of the bush. Better than processed junk you feed your kids in town.

OLD BILL
I don't think the taste of it is the issue here Max.

MAX
If it wasn't I wouldn't be here. It's our kai, always has been.

Max sits back with his arms folded. Manu appears looking somewhat dishevelled in the doorway. He makes his way..... sheepishly to a seat.

GLENDA
If those figures are correct. We should be looking at a total ban on harvesting the bird. A rahui.

OLD BILL
A rahui would send out a clear message.

MAX
Bugger the rahui. It's just a bloody bird for christ sake. I wish you feel as strong about our kids, when they go off the rails.

GLENDA
We do Max. We do. It's for our kids we need to preserve what we have.
What's to be left for our mokupuna, if we shoot them all? They'll be like the moa, or the kahu.

MAX
It's not our fault they didn't survive. The forests were taken from us. We didn't chop down the trees. We didn't kick the birds out of their homes. The tarere did that. The Europeans. We looked after the bush.
The birds will still be here if they'd followed our lore. L-O-R-E. Not their bloody l-a-w.

GLENDA
Our tribe is named after kahu. Imagine what it'd be like if it was still here up there in the skies ....

MAX
It's not though is it. It's all evolution.
(MORE)

MAX (CONT'D)
The fattest, the clumsiest don't survive. If the birds are not up to it ....they don't get to hang around. End up as kai.

GLENDA
We should be helping this bird to survive. A rahui would see to that.

Max, his arms folded glares around the room.

MAX
C'mon. Let's see where you all stand on this. Take a vote.

OLD BILL
Max, we haven't discussed this fully.

MAX
More than fully enough for me. Those in favour of supporting me in court ....that the kukupa is a traditional food source of our people ....and as such we have every right to harvest them.....say aye.

A couple of hands go up. Max sighs.

MAX (CONT'D)
Those against.

Most of the hands in the room are raised. Max doesn't wait on ceremony. Disgusted, he rises to his feet.

MAX (CONT'D)
Call yourselves a committee. You're a bloody rabble. What a joke. Un bloody believable. Chance to make a stand and you all go weak kneed and PC on me. I'll do it my bloody self. Show you.

Max storms out of the committee meeting. Manu watches him go.

EXT. OUTSIDE HALL -DAY

Manu stands on the steps watching Max plough off in his white valiant. Old Bill comes up behind him.

OLD BILL
Looks like you've got your work cut out for you there boy.

Manu gives a quick grimace of a grin.

EXT. CHOOK SHED -DAY

Kevin stares through the meche at Brian ...who sits there in the shadows, listening to the noises of the hens.

INT. CHOOK SHED -DAY

The faces of the hens are going in and out of focus. Brian stares intently up at them all on their perches. There's a knock on the hen house door. Kevin enters, bringing a mug of coffee and a piece of cake to Brian.

KEVIN
I brought you this.

Brian stares at the cake ....that blurs in and out of focus.

BRIAN
Thanks but I'm off cake Kev. I'll have the coffee though.

Kevin stands there eating the cake, staring down at Brian. Brian slurps his coffee. He stares down into the coffee mug and sees what seem to be clouds floating above the surface of the coffee.

KEVIN
What's wrong?

BRIAN
I don't know son. I don't know. Something went on. I dunno what. I'm still tryin' to level with what.

KEVIN
Have you done something you shouldn't have?

BRIAN
How did you know?

Brian looks accusingly at Kevin. Kevin shrugs his shoulders.

KEVIN
I dunno.

Brian looks haggard as he sighs ....

BRIAN
Don't tell yer mother, eh.

KEVIN
Wouldn't know what to tell her anyway.

BRIAN
Neither would I boy.

Brian drains his coffee.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Better go and clock in I suppose.

The hens appear to be clucking "Guilty, guilty." Kevin stares from his step father, to the hens.

FADE OUT.

FADE TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Brian is led up the steps of the police station by the hobbling Kevin. The pair of them walk into the police station.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Benson is irate.

BENSON
Where the fuck have you been? We're overworked enough as it is ..... without you taking leave when it suits ya.

Brian looks stunned.

BENSON (CONT'D)
Well? Where the hell have you been?

Brian points towards the door.

BRIAN
Out there.

BENSON
Eh? Where?

BRIAN
In the night.

Benson gestures angrily to the boy.

BENSON
The night? Listen tell your brat to piss off. Told ya the police force is not a baby-sitting service.

BRIAN
Thanks Kev. Bloody good of ya. Catch ya soon.

Kevin hobbles back out the door on his crutches. Benson casts his eyes over Brian.

BENSON
You look terrible. Make some coffee will you? And don't make it too weak.

Benson returns to his work.

INT. POLICE KITCHEN -DAY

Brian gropes around trying to find plunger, jug and coffee ....making a hash of the job. He keeps adding more and more spoonfuls to the plunger.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Brian shakes his head ....like he's got some kind of tick operating ...like a wasp keeps landing on his face.

Brian carries a mug of coffee over to Benson.

Benson asks.

BENSON
What's eating you?

BRIAN
Nothing.

BENSON
Cat bit your tongue?

Brian shakes his head in quick nervy manner. Benson shakes his head in dismissive fashion, and returns to his paper work.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Benson reaches over for a sip of coffee, suddenly he reels back, spitting hot coffee out.

BENSON
Christ. What the fuck is this?

BRIAN
Did I put too much in?

BENSON
You've surpassed yourself this time Brash. This is truly disgusting.

Benson stares in dismissive manner over at Brian, as Brian scurries back across the room.

Brian invents something to keep him busy by pulling out a drawer full of files. He flicks thru' them. He sees the face of several well known petty crims about town. One is of Hepi. The photo appears to wink back at Brian. Brian quickly closes the file drawer.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

Brian darts over towards the doorway. Benson spots him and yells out to him.

BENSON
Oy! Where do you think you're going? Haven't said you could go anywhere.

Head down Brian scurries outside.

INT. MAX'S HOUSE -DAY

Manu stands in the doorway. Max is tucking into a feed.

MAX
Guilty? I'm not pleading guilty.

MANU
You might have to.

MAX
Like fuck I do.

MANU
You wanna go to jail?

MAX
Is that the choice?

MANU
More or less.

MAX
Hardly a bloody choice.

Manu shrugs.

MANU
Listen Uncle Max .....you have to make it appear as though you at least show some remorse for what you've done.

MAX
Remorse? Jesus! Suppose you'll want me dressed in a chicken suit waving a white flag.

MANU
And being a smart arse to the judge won't help your sentence. So let me do the talking, alright. (PAUSE) I'm going to make an application for community service. You'll be looking at working alongside DOC to set up a sanctuary for kukupa ....in an area known to have been a former hunting ground for kukupa. You're going to put your past experience to good use. Show you're reformed.

MAX
Am I?

MANU
You are.

MAX
(MUTTERING)
Over my dead body.

MANU
So are you with me?

Max looks hard at Manu.

MAX
Guilty you reckon?

MANU
Guilty as sin.

Max chuckles. Manu can only manage a brief smile.

EXT. GRAVESIDE -DAY

A crowd of people are making their way towards the graveside. Locals, relatives, and friends have gathered to pay respect to Edit Krassoll.

INT. ANGELA'S CAR -DAY

Angela, Sarah and George sit in the car smoking a joint. With rapt attention they watch the mourners.

SARAH
People ignore you when you're alive, then they all turn up when you die.

ANGELA
I dig death though.

GEORGE
Why?

ANGELA
I think it's so cool when people cry. It's like they've let a river release inside.

George doesn't get the gist. He shrugs.

GEORGE
Whatever turns you on.

ANGELA
Rivers.

SARAH
And dolphins.

ANGELA
Yeah whales and dolphins ....they had it sussed.

SARAH
Whales knew alright.

ANGELA
They weren't gonna get milked.

Steve wanders head-down towards the grave, chessboard under his arm.

They all continue to stare at the mourners entering the graveyard.

EXT. GRAVEYARD -DAY

Manu's car pulls up outside the graveyard. Sharon, Manu and a very reluctant looking Marama climb out. They make their way to the graveside.

A dark car pulls up outside the rural cemetery ..... Albie Patricovich comes around to the passenger door .....and opens the door for an elegant looking lady. This lady is unrecognizable as Harry. This "lady" dressed in black ....takes Harry's arm and enters the graveyard, following those heading for the grave.

EXT. GRAVESIDE -DAY

People stand looking down at the grave. The Minister looks around .....not sure whether he should start the proceedings without Harry in attendance. The minister coughs.

MINISTER
I suppose we should get this service underway, whether Mr Urlich is here or not. That alright with everybody?

STEVE
Yeah sure.

Steve gestures a thumbs up to the Minister .....who opens his old black bible and begin reading from Corinthians ....

MINISTER
Let's see. Yes here we are. Corinthians 4:18
"While we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Gust of wind blows through the trees. Steve stares upward into the sky.

INT. ANGELA'S CAR -DAY

George notices something.

GEORGE
Put the smoke out eh?

ANGELA
Why?

GEORGE
Over there.

They look in the direction of the trees surrounding the graveyard.

EXT. GRAVESIDE-DAY

A bedraggled looking Brian is sneaking around behind the trees, moving closer to the service going on.

EXT. GRAVESIDE -DAY

The coffin is lying in the freshly dug hole. Mourners are all gathered around the grave of Steves mum. The MINISTER is concluding an incantation of sorts.

MINISTER
But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse .....

Steve interrupts the minister as he breaks into a Shakespearean sonnet.

There's a gasp from some of those present. Steve recites from one of Shakespeare sonnets.

STEVE
When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes. I all alone beweep my outcast state. And trouble deaf heavens with my bootless cries.

HARRY shuffles over from where he's standing and nudges Steve into the grave. Steve tumbles in. The chess board falls and the pieces clatter and bounce on the shiny wood of the coffin.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Shit!

Mourners are surprised to hear the deep voice of Harry emit from the black dressed widow like woman.

HARRY
Get outa there.

There's a gasp from the mourners.

HARRY (CONT'D)
That's my bloody sister in there.

Steve stares aggrieved back up at Harry.

STEVE
My bloody mother.

The crowd fidget nervously.

HARRY
Show her some respect then.

STEVE
I'll say what I like.

HARRY
Say what you like then...but get outa the bloody grave to say it.

The chess pieces lie all over the coffin. Steve scrambles back out of the grave.

There's discomfort amongst the mourners. The Minister seems at a bit of a loss. Disapproving murmuring of voices.

Manu looks over at Sharon, shakes his head.

SHARON
(WHISPERING)
Mad fuckin' dallies.

Sharon and Manu find it hard to suppress the giggles.

Steve carries on regardless, launching back into the sonnet.

Crane pulls back as he orates.

STEVE
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising. Happily I think on thee and then my thoughts like to the lark at break of day arising from sullen earth, sings hymns at heavens gate. For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings that then I scorn to change my state with kings.

The mourners are seen from above. Like the spirit having drifted away. Rural setting for the cemetery plot of Steve's mum; EDIT KRASSOLL.

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE

Max goes out to his garage. He reaches up into the rafters and retrieves a gun. He wraps the gun in a blanket, collects some ammunition. He opens the car boot and puts the gun inside. He goes around to the front, and starts his big old car up.

The car chugs out of Max's driveway, and on up the street. Max looks staunchly about him as he drives off into the countryside.

EXT. GRAVESIDE -DAY

Steve turns back to notice a shabby looking policeman approaching the grave.

Brian moves towards the mound of freshly dug earth, a bunch of flowers in his hand. Brian tosses the flowers onto the graveyard. He hangs his head. He is surprised when the figure of Steve appears from behind him.

Steve looks from Brian to the flowers. There's a card attached. Steve picks up the card which simply says ..... "Sorry." Steve turns it over but nothing else is written on it.

STEVE
My mother? How did you know her?

Brian looks extremely agitated.

BRIAN
Must have the wrong grave.

Brian furtively turns to hurry off. Steve stops him with a shout.

STEVE
You know why she's in there don't you?

BRIAN
Eh? Me .....no. How would I know? I'm a cop. That's what I do.

STEVE
You're Brian Brash right?

BRIAN
Maybe so.

STEVE
Listen Brash. Come with me.

Brian tries to back away. Steve pulls him along.

EXT. MAX'S HOUSE -DAY

Max is putting a long bundle into the back of his car. Patsy looks on from the doorway.

PATSY
If you're going where I think you're going, you'd better think again.

MAX
I have thought again. That's why I'm going.

PATSY
Well it's on your head.

MAX
Yip it's on my head.

Max pulls his hat down before climbing into the car and driving off.

INT. SHARONS SALON -DAY

Bacon and eggs are frying in the pan. Sharon turns to see Manu dressed in an expensive looking suit, with professional looking briefcase in hand.

SHARON
Shit bro, look at you.

MANU
Gotta look the part.

SHARON
Want a feed before you go?

MANU
Wouldn't say no.

SHARON
Sit down. Sit down. Hey Marama, get your arse in here girl. Grub's up.

Marama arrives in the doorway.

MARAMA
You look cool uncle Manu.

MANU
Bloody better .....suits like this don't come cheap.

They all tuck in to eat.

SHARON
Sorted Uncle Max out?

MANU
Yip meeting him at the courthouse. Finally agreed to be the patron saint of the kukupa.

SHARON
Good to see the ol' bugger come around.

MANU
Dunno if he's come around, but let's hope he shows.

The kitchen door opens suddenly as though someone enters. They all turn but there is no-one there. Just a gust of wind.

EXT. HARRY'S HOUSE -DAY

Dressed in his feminine finery .....Harry stands with wine glass, staring down at the freshly dug mound overlooking the grapevines.

Albie comes over and puts his arms around Harry. They waltz around the grave.

ALBIE
For a bloke, I suppose you're not too bad on your feet.

HARRY
Complement from you. What have I done to deserve that?

ALBIE
You smell good for a start.

HARRY
Better than your wives?

ALBIE
Much better. Some of 'em used to confuse deodorant with fly spray. Shockers to sleep with. Wake up with a bloody headache, and dead flies everywhere. Crush 'em in the sheets.

They continue to dance.

INT. CAR -DAY

Steve pulls out the rolled out notebook. He finds the page and shows it to Brian.

BRIAN
How did you get that?

STEVE
Doesn't matter how I got it. Look at it, the date. That's the day she died, isn't it?

BRIAN
Is it?

Steve takes something from his pocket. He shows Brian the piece of blue serge material.

STEVE
What were you doing there anyway?

Brian sighs, looks guilty, then replies.

BRIAN
Me? Well, she had a bird, she had the kereru. Receiving's just as bad as theft you know. In the eyes of the law it is. That's what we're there to enforce. That's all. Someone's gotta do it.

STEVE
And you enforced it?

BRIAN
The fridge did. The fridge killed her, not me. She came at me. I was only defending meself. (PAUSE) Where are we goin' anyway?

STEVE
Up the way a bit.

The car bounces up the rutted road that leads to the gumfields. The road becomes rougher ....the occupants are joggled around.

STEVE (CONT'D)
They travelled half way 'round the world to get here. Spent their lives busting a gut ....six days a week ....chopping trees ....digging kauri gum. Then no-one wanted gum anymore, and the land was fucked. Look at it. All barren ....and fucked.

Brian stares groggily out the window. The barren lands of the gumfields are all around.

The car bounces over the rutted road. Suffering from lack of sleep and a still drug addled brain .....Brian looks haggard.

EXT. BUSH - DAY

Max trudges through the bush .....gun in hand. He stops when he hears a call in the bush. He listens to the "coo coo' of the kukupa. Having identified the source of the sound .....Max makes his way further into the bush.

The kukupa can be seen eating berries in a tree. There's a steep gully between Max and the bird. Max lifts the gun, but can't get a clear shot of the bird. Gingerly making his way down the gully .....a foot becomes entangled in bush lawyer .... a tree root further compounds the problem.

Max plummets headfirst. The gun is dropped, as Max tries to regain his balance. Over and over Max tumbles, down towards the stream at the bottom of the gully. Max lands awkwardly against the river rocks in the gully. He winces in pain. Max tries to move his leg, but it's broken, and very bloody painful it is too.

The kukupa flies closer. It lands in the tree above Max. It shows no fear. It sits in the tree above Max, glancing casually down at him, while it continues to feed.

Max stares up at the plump kukupa.

MAX
What are you looking at?

The kukupa continues feeding on the miro berries in the tree above Max.

MAX (CONT'D)
You just gonna sit there. What do you want from me? Eh? You gonna do something ....or not?

Max stares up at the kukupa. Max takes the battered cellphone from his pocket. He punches in a series of numbers. There is no coverage. Max mutters a curse.

Up in the tree ....the kukupa chews contentedly on a berry.

THE FIGURES OF MAN AND BIRD BECOME SMALLER AND SMALLER TILL THEY ARE NO LONGER DISTINGUISHABLE.

EXT. GUMFIELDS - DAY

In the middle of the barren wastelands of the Gumfields .... Brian stands with his ankles handcuffed together ... blinking into the harsh sun.

Steve takes Brian's mobile phone out of his pocket.

STEVE
The way I see it .... justice gets miscarried doesn't it? You get shat on ..... but you don't get to shit on anyone for it, do ya? Where's the justice in that, eh? Now the deputy walks on hard nails.

BRIAN
Eh? C'mon mate. Not gonna leave me like this?

Steve offers Brian the rolled up notebook.

STEVE
You might survive, you might not. Mum didn't get that choice did she? No show or shit show.

Steve hands over the rolled up notebook. It looks like a baton, as Brian holds it in his hand.

The car backs up and turns around.

Brian stares forlornly at the retreating car, he tries to move forward, but finds the handcuffs make for very torturous progress. Brian struggles forward, baton in hand.

EXT. NINETY MILE BEACH -MORNING

The car bounces along the rutted road.

EXT. COURTHOUSE -DAY

Manu waits on the steps of the courthouse, staring up the street, but there's no sign of Max.

The cellphone sounds from inside his pocket. Manu answers it. The call cuts out when he answers it.

Manu sighs. Benson appears in the doorway of the courthouse.

BENSON
Hey lawyer boy.

Manu looks over in Benson's direction.

BENSON (CONT'D)
Proceedings are about to begin. You ready .....or you wanna flag it?

Manu looks both ways up the street. The streets seem empty. He passes Benson as he walks inside.

MANU
No, we'll see it through.

Manu walks off to the courtroom.

EXT. GUMFIELDS - DAY

Through the heat haze ....a lonely figure in what appears to be ankle chains .... stumbles slowly across the bleak horizon. The rolled up notebook has the appearance of a baton. Where ever Brian is going, he's obviously not going to get there very fast. The shadow of a bird passes over him. Brian shades his eyes from the harsh sun, as he stares up and watches the bird fly effortlessly off into the distance. Brian continues to trudge forward.

EXT. NINETY MILE BEACH -DAY

A car is racing through the shallows of Ninety Mile Beach. The car does a 360 before racing on.

EXT. BUSH - DAY

The kukupa sits serenely in the tree. Max stares up at the bird .....seemingly imploring it to do something. It quietly chews on a berry.

MAX
Make you feel better does it ....up there on high. You could fly and get help. That'd be a start. I'd look after you boy, don't you worry about that. Make it my mission. What do you say? Wanna work together?

C/U DISTINCTIVE RED EYES OF KUKUPA LOOKING DOWN AT MAX.

The kukupa turns it's attention from the river bed, and the prone figure of Max. The bird swoops off, soaring across the valley. The bird's wings ....lift it gracefully above the bush canopy. Off into the horizon the kukupa flies.

Theme song from "Somewhere Further North."

THE END.